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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 1-year's worth of a bimonthly newsletter containing news and information about adult literacy and adult basic education for practitioners. These six issues contain professional information, employment notices, and articles on the following topics: working in adult basic education; a conference on learner participation in adult education; English-as-a-Second-Language tutor training; student attitudes about adult basic education; intercultural communication; student evaluation; teacher exchange and observation; the Boston Adult Literacy Fund; alternative teaching and discussion techniques in the classroom; writing instruction; Danish adult education; choosing non-defeating tests; a method for teaching arithmetic; program-based staff development; student-teacher alliances; and Massachusetts legislative efforts. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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ALL WRITE NEWS
July/August 1988
Volume V
Adult Literacy Institute

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ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE INSTITUTE

ALL WRITE NEWS

July / August 1988 Volume V Number 1

A Joint Program of Roxbury Community College & the University of Massachusetts at Boston
Located at: 625 Huntington Ave., Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 232-4695

Forum

Real Work-- Real Jobs

by Linda Brown and Jon Deveaux

[In our March/April issue, we published an article on "Organizing an Adult Ed. Union," by Rhonda Seidman, Lisa Schwartz, and Barbara Neumann. Reading this article reminded Jon Deveaux at Bronx Educational Services in New York City of two pieces (one written by Linda Brown and one written by himself) published in the April, 1987, issue of the New York City Literacy Assistance Center newsletter. He sent them to us, and we decided (with the permission of the authors and the LAC) to reprint them for our readers. The articles are obviously written from the perspective of program staff in New York City, but the issues discussed here regarding working conditions in the field of adult basic education are remarkably similar to those issues facing teachers and other staff here in Boston. --Ed.]

In 1974, I started work as a teacher at the Bronx House of Detention. I earned $5.00 an hour for a thirty hour work week--no health benefits, no sick pay, no pension, no vacation. I also did not have a materials budget, although I could use the institution's mimeograph machine. I bought newspapers and books with my own money.

I was pathetically grateful for this job. I thought, "Isn't it extraordinary that someone is willing to pay me to do the work I want to do?" I had imagined that I would have to volunteer to teach reading to adults, and would support myself in some other way.

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Report from Western Mass.

Teachers & Students: Partners in Learning

by Kim Gerould

On Saturday, April 23, a conference quite unlike any other I've attended was held at UMass/Amherst. It was jointly sponsored by the Literacy Coalition of Western Mass., the Literacy Support Initiative of UMass, and World Education, and its name, "Learner Participation in Adult Education: Partners in Learning," was truly reflected throughout the day's activities. This was not a conference of teachers and administrators talking among themselves; approximately a third of the 120 participants were learners from programs around the region, and the presenters included both learners and people working in programs.

Starting off the day with a solid dose of reality--and fun--was the Northern New England Adult Education Social Action Theater Group, made up of adult educators from New Hampshire. They acted out several short scenes reflecting what happens in many of our programs, such as the distraught student who comes into class with an eviction notice and the teacher who wants her to focus on word problems. The action then stopped and the audience questioned the actors, still in their characters, about why they did what they did and how they felt. Audience members also made comments and gave advice. The theater format brought the classroom into the conference and encouraged us to respond concretely, and often emotionally, to the situations.

This common experience was an excellent warm-up for the morning workshops in which

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Real Work--Real Jobs

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It strikes me that this attitude is not uncommon among Adult Basic Education and English As A Second Language teachers, especially among new teachers and teachers who have entered the field after leaving some other kind of work. We feel lucky because we get to spend our time with interesting people whom we would not have gotten to know under ordinary circumstances, and we get to feel useful. I still feel lucky and I still love my job. However, the longer I stay doing this work, the stronger other feelings about this career have become.

Virtually all ABE and ESL teachers are paid by the hour and work part-time. There are almost no full-time jobs, even for those who want them. Some people manage to work full-time, but only by putting together a patchwork quilt of part-time jobs--one class in an ABE program in Brooklyn, one class in a program in Queens, and maybe a class as an adjunct instructor at a community college. Most teachers are not paid when they don't work--over Christmas and Easter vacations, during the summer or when they are absent because they are sick. Most do not have pensions. Most have no job security. And most do not have health benefits.

We teachers need to change our attitude. Yes, we're lucky--but we also provide a valuable service, to our students, our city, and, not to be too dramatic about this, our country. What is America if not a land of dreams of self-improvement? People want to make their lives better, and their children's lives better, through their own efforts. We are part of those efforts, for native-born Americans who were not properly educated, and for the foreign-born who have come to live and work here. Most of us work hard; a three-hour class is three hours of real putting forth of energy. Then there is the work we do outside of class. We deserve the kinds of conditions and benefits that we want for our students. We do not want the people we have come to care for in our classes to work for substandard pay with no benefits. We need to set an example ourselves. I have heard it argued that teachers should be paid more than janitors, because teachers are better-educated and provide skilled labor. I don't agree. I think everyone should be paid a reasonable wage, and I don't think teachers deserve more money because they were fortunate enough to go to college. But I do think teachers should be paid as much as janitors.

Here is the main argument against full-time jobs and benefits for teachers; I know most of you are familiar with it. If teachers are paid what they should be paid, programs will serve fewer students. After all, the money has to come from somewhere: more health benefits mean fewer classes. We're told not to be greedy, or our students will suffer. We're robbing the poor. I have two responses to this: first, I suggest that the next time someone presents this argument to you, you stop the discussion and ask how much the person talking to you makes a year. This is informative. Second, I believe that our students are hurt more because there is such a tremendous turnover in our field, and good teachers are forced to stop teaching because they cannot support themselves and their families. Experience counts for a lot in teaching; good intentions are not enough. All of us know good people who have left the field entirely, or have become administrators. We need to be able to keep good teachers and to keep talented novices around long enough so that they can become good teachers.

We've been patient. Now we must decide upon what we need most, and then we must work (dare I say fight?) to make changes. Changes are not going to just happen; we must bring them about. I haven't done research on this, but just so we'll have a figure for discussion, I propose that the wage for an ABE or ESL teacher who works full-time, even if that time is spread out over two or three locations, should be at least $25,000 per year. Second, all teachers should have health insurance benefits supplied through their jobs; because so many teachers work for more than one employer, a special agency needs to be set up to address this issue. Third, full-time teaching jobs must be created. Not everyone wants to work full-time, it is true; but the present system of part-time jobs was created not for the convenience of teachers, but to save money.

We do real work. We deserve real jobs.

--Linda Brown

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Real Work--Real Jobs

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The need is clear. Teachers who work full time contribute to a program through the curriculum and the extracurricular activities they develop for the students. Most people acknowledge that the most effective staff development activities involve teachers talking to one another over lunch, coffee or in regularly scheduled sessions each week. If the ABE community in NYC is to continue to grow and develop its collective talent, there must be more full-time positions funded.

Full-time must be redefined for ABE. Any teacher who works 27 or 28 or more hours per week should be considered full-time and should receive full benefits. Our experience at Bronx Ed is that you can create schedules which enable teachers to work 27 hours or so each week. We have a mother of four who works 5 mornings, 2 evenings and 1 afternoon per week. Another teacher works 4 evenings per week and 3 afternoons. Two teachers put in two 12-hour days to go with two 9-to-5 days, and work only 4 days a week. If we are to develop strong, creative literacy centers, we must have more full-time teachers.

We will, however, always have and need fine part-time teachers in ABE. Some of these teachers work 15 to 25 hours a week and need health coverage, life insurance, and deserve paid vacations. We need to establish a centrally coordinated benefits plan to which programs can make payments for their part-time personnel. The plan could or could not require an employee to make a contribution. If we are to have employees of the ABE community, those great teachers who work 6 hours at one program, 4 at another and 9 at still another, we should have a way for all their employers to make contributions to this one centrally administered benefits plan for part-time ABE teachers. Could the LAC administer such a plan? Could the Coalition of Adult Education Providers develop such a service? Someone must if we are to continue to attract and keep talented part-time ABE teachers in our NYC ABE community.

--Jon Deveaux

* * * * * *

Linda Brown is now a full-time ABE teacher at New York City Technical College. Jon Deveaux is the director of B.E.S.

Job Exchange

United South End Settlements needs a full-time Teacher/Volunteer Coordinator for their high school diploma and literacy volunteer programs. Experience required. Call Bill Gant at 536-8610.

Roxbury Community College's Community Collaborative needs 1) part-time ESL Teachers starting in September to work primarily with Haitians from literacy to pre-GED levels; 8 hrs/wk, mornings/evenings; $10-16/hr; and 2) a part-time Bilingual (Haitian creole) Counselor--14-16 hrs/wk, mornings/evenings; $10-14/hr. Resume to: RCC, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120 attn: Mavis Grant, Huntington Ave. campus.

The City of Boston's ESL Workplace Program needs a half-time ESL Instructor starting Sept. 1; 3 yrs ESL experience or graduate degree in ESL or related field required. $12-15/hr. Call Joan LaMachia at 725-3360.

The Jefferson Park Writing Center needs: 1) an Administrative Coordinator--30-35 hrs/wk; 2) an Adult Educational Program Coordinator--30 hrs/wk; 3) a Creative Writing Teacher--20 hrs/wk; and 4) an Assistant ESL Teacher for their Haitian Program--10 hrs/wk, evenings. All begin in Sept.; $10-11/hr with vacations and partial health benefits. People of color strongly urged to apply. Resume to: JPWC, 6 Jefferson Park, Cambridge, MA 02140.

Cambridge Public Housing needs a full-time Teacher to provide various ABE services through high school level for diverse public housing community. Teaching experience required. $21,000+, flexible schedule. Call Kay Hagemann or Mike Hurley at 354-1940.

ESAC needs a full-time Bilingual Clinician to do counseling with elderly residents of JP and surrounding neighborhoods. Experience or degree in related field preferred; must be bilingual (Spanish/English). Resume to: Elaine Mittell, ESAC Senior Team, P.O. Box 4, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

The International Institute needs a full-time ESL Language Program Coordinator. BA (with ESL training preferred), 3 yrs adult ESL teaching experience, 3 yrs administrative and supervisory experience required. $18,300-21,700. Resume to: Joan LeMarbre, IIB, 287 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02115.

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Partners in Learning

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learners, teachers, volunteers and administrators shared experiences and questions on a variety of themes: the experiences of learning-disabled adults; time management strategies for adults and ways programs can flexibly respond to their needs; and participatory methods used in teaching ESL in UMass/Boston's Family Literacy Project. There were also learner support groups, in both English and Spanish, in which learners discussed common experiences and problems.

The workshop I attended was about learning disabilities, and in my traditional conference mode, I expected to learn some about what learning disabilities are, how they're diagnosed, and how one teaches learning-disabled adults. Instead, two former students of Pittsfield's Project READ spoke intimately of their experiences as dyslexic adults, how they began to deal with their disability and eventually learned to read, and what their lives are like now. Their teacher briefly commented on how the project works with dyslexic adults. I left the workshop deeply moved by the stories of these two learners' struggles and successes, and realized that it had been exactly the right starting point for me to learn about learning disabilities.

The afternoon session began with Dalita Gutierrez, a Mexican woman who lives in Chicago, who spoke to us of her personal struggle to learn to read and write English and Spanish and to speak English, and to find a program that addressed her needs. The process led her to become a teacher herself and eventually the director of a community-based adult education program. She spoke of feeling as if she were a spectator in her own life and blaming herself each time she dropped out of a program. She reminded us that if programs don't deal with issues of self-esteem and power in the community, a student can leave a program able to read and write, but still feel worthless and powerless. Her program in Chicago has the community developing the program's shape; unless we have community people involved, we are imposing our own agendas. She asked us in our afternoon workshops to share not only what was working in our programs, but also the things that weren't working.

The afternoon workshops included test-taking strategies for the GED, a well-attended session on looking at one's learning style, and a follow-up discussion with Dalita. Two related workshops were held in Spanish, focusing on issues in the Latin communities in the area. The first one explored the major problems confronting the community and ways people can participate to effect change. The second workshop picked up on this theme, focusing on mental health issues, and looked at both the positive and negative aspects of the reality of Hispanics in these communities. The participants then briefly looked at ways adult education can promote mental health.

Other workshops described the state's Workplace Education Program, looking specifically at the program at UMass/Amherst. Another session examined how learner participation in both managing programs and in the instructional process can change and benefit programs. A workshop with a related theme focused on how learners can design and produce educational materials, using the example of photo-novels.

We ended the day with a few more skits from the theater group, some of which were based on the conference itself, allowing us to watch ourselves and reflect on the day's experiences. Many participants I spoke with expressed their excitement about the uniqueness of the day; there had been genuine dialogue and sharing among learners and teachers, as well as presenters and participants. The learning was circular, not one way, modeling what many of us want to achievve in our programs, and learners expressed themselves clearly and powerfully, helping us see what is really important in our programs. This conference hopefully marks the beginning of more genuine learner participation, both in conferences in the region and in our programs.

- -

Kim Gerould works with pregnant and parenting teens at the CARE Center in Holyoke, MA.

Getting Started in ESL

by Janet Kaplan

Dear A.L.R.I. ESL Tutors,

I was asked by one of your workshop leaders, Loren McGrail, to report informally on what I have been doing since going through the tutor training program at the A.L.R.I. over a year ago. Let me start back a bit further than that.

In the fall of 1986, after graduating from college, I moved to Boston looking for a job either related to something international or to photography; those were my two main areas of interest at that time. I didn't have any luck finding international work, but I did get a job at a photographic publishing company, doing administrative tasks. On the side, however, I took the A.L.R.I. ESL tutor training workshops, which inspired me greatly! I had always been interested in languages, people from other cultures, and psychology, and suddenly I felt I had found a field in which all of my interests could be combined.

After one of the workshop sessions, I talked with Loren about her background and training in ESL; this is when I learned about the School for International Training. At a later date I met with Loren and she told me more about the school. It was in Brattleboro, Vermont, and offered an alternative, experientially-based Master's degree program in teaching ESL, as well as teaching French and Spanish. Part of the program involved doing a teaching internship during which you would have an opportunity to try out the methods and techniques you had learned about in the classroom, as well as the chance to be observed by more experienced teachers who could offer suggestions and some perspective on your teaching. Extremely interested in the program and in learning more about teaching, I called the school's 800 number and got more information.

Since that time a little over a year ago, I have completed the coursework for my degree and lived and taught in Mexico for 2 1/2 months (my teaching internship). Now I am planning to move back to Boston to teach at Cardinal Cushing for the summer. And then, who knows? In the last week, I have heard about job openings in Honduras, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Japan, Indonesia, and throughout the States! One of the benefits of connecting with a program such as this one is that you hear about things going on in the field all over the world. By working with the A.L.R.I. you have already taken a big step in that direction.

I would like to add one comment: many people wonder if it's necessary to get a Master's degree in order to teach ESL. This is a tricky question. Some people say that more and more employers are looking for the degree when they hire teachers, especially in the public schools. There's the usual catch in that it's hard to get work if you have no experience and no degree and yet you can't get experience if no one will give you a chance to teach. I had a very hard time finding a teaching job last summer because of this. I know teachers, however, who have little formal training and who have learned everything they know BY TEACHING. Somehow they have worked their way up to teaching; perhaps they started as tutors or were "at the right place at the right time." There are some jobs overseas that anyone can get; there are others which require experience and/or a Master's. Often a Master's degree brings you into a higher salary bracket, which can be pretty important in this field!

Personally, I wanted to get my training through a degree program because I knew that I would feel more confident stepping into the classroom after learning ABOUT teaching first. That just happens to be my style. The program I chose emphasized the practical applications of the methods, techniques and ideas we studied, as well as the theories. It also required me to examine why I wanted to teach in a certain way and why I felt more comfortable with some methods than with others. In other words, it helped me to take some big steps in figuring out what my approach to teaching is.

I suppose what I can leave you with is my enthusiasm for the field. It is growing, there are many books to read, many people to talk with, many new ideas to explore, many students to get to know and many teachers who work hard and like to share ideas and talk about their work with other teachers and tutors, such as you. I encourage you to continue to explore your options and to get more experince. The more you explore, the more there is to discover about teaching, about learning, about language, about people, and about yourselves.

Why Not Write for the Newsletter?

Have you ever thought about submitting something for publication in the All Write News? If not, please do! This newsletter is meant to be one way in which teachers, counselors, administrators, aides, volunteers, students and others in adult literacy/adult basic education can communicate with one another. But that doesn't happen unless people like you send us material. Please read the Editorial Policy printed below for a list of the kinds of things we're seeking and for the (very few) requirements that apply. And feel free to call me (Steve Reuys) if you have any questions or would like to discuss any ideas you may have for an article.

Because of summer schedules, the deadline for submitting material for the next issue will be August 1. But please keep the newsletter in mind throughout the rest of the year, as well. We're very eager to get more material to publish from the community!

All Write News Editorial Policy

The All Write News is published every two months by the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. Its purpose is to present news and information dealing with adult literacy/adult basic education and to provide an open forum for articles and other types of material that are written by and for adult literacy/adult basic education practitioners and other interested persons in the greater Boston area and that represent a variety of individual points of view.

We encourage people to submit to us:

--articles that reflect a wide variety of approaches to adult literacy/adult basic education methods, materials, and philosophy;

--reviews of books, instructional materials, curricula, audio-visual materials, software, etc. which could be helpful to adult learners or deal with adult literacy/adult basic education;

--articles about adult literacy/adult basic education in other countries and cultures;

--information resources (financial and otherwise) available to adult literacy/adult basic education programs;

--news about adult literacy/adult basic education programs (including but not limited to those in the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative) and about other organizations working in related areas;

--material in other, non-prose formats (such as poetry, graphics, cartoons, etc.);

--responses to previously-published articles or other material;

--any other items relevant to adult literacy/adult basic education.

(Please send all material to the newsletter editor, Steve Reuys, at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Roxbury Community College, 625 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115. The deadline for submitting material for an upcoming issue is approximately one month from your receipt of the previous issue.)

All articles and other material must be related to adult literacy/adult basic education (broadly defined), must be of reasonable length (generally not more than 5-6 double-spaced typed pages or the equivalent), and must, to the best of our knowledge, be factually accurate. We reserve the right to reject articles which advocate racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, anti-semitism, or cultural superiority or which are libelous or consist essentially of personal attacks on individuals.

All signed articles represent the opinions of the individual authors and are not intended to reflect the views or policies of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute or its sponsoring institutions or funders.

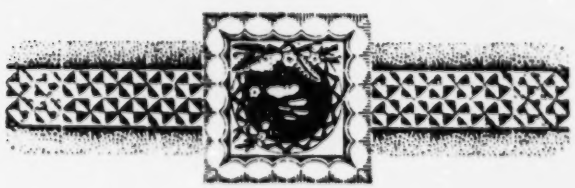
For Your Information

Critical Thinking Project Outreach

During the past year and a half, the A.L.R.I. has been conducting a special project funded by the state Department of Education on Critical Thinking in ABE. Barbara Neumann, the project's coordinator at the A.L.R.I., worked together with a small group of program teachers to explore ways of integrating critical thinking into ABE curricula. The group of teachers included: Ana Zambrano from the Jackson/Mann Community School, Cathy Anderson and Rosario Gomez from Mujeres Unidas en Accion, Sarah Boyer and Lil Cooper from United South End Settlements, and Frances Wright from WEAVE.

The project itself is now winding up, but there is at least one way during the coming year in which you can benefit from all the work they have done. Through the state's Commonwealth Inservice Institute, you could hire as consultants the people who worked on this project so that they can come to work with your program in this area. Commonwealth Inservice grants are relatively easy to apply for, but the "convenor" of a project must belong to the group that constitutes a majority of those who will be participating in the project. (That is, if a project will mainly be working with teachers, then the proposal must come from a teacher.) Also, only programs that are funded, at least partially, through the state Department of Education are eligible to apply. Most grants range from $1000 to $3000 and may cover consultant fees, transportation costs, and expenses for training materials.

If you think you might be interested in applying for Commonwealth Inservice Institute funds in order to learn more at your program about critical thinking and our critical thinking special project, you can get more information about the application process from Arthur Murray at the Greater Boston Regional Education Center, 641-4870, or you can call Barbara Neumann (522-7797) to find out more about the critical thinking project.



Info. on Driver Test Options

As I reported in an earlier issue, I'm working on making the process of driver licensing more accessible to ABE and ESL students by: a) revising the Registry manuals that license applicants study from; b) designing driver education curriculum specifically for ABE and ESL students; and c) exploring other possibilities, such as revising the test itself, developing instructional software or video, revising the application forms, etc.

While there are no materials available yet to replace or supplement the Registry's existing manual, I have been acquiring bits of information that are not well-publicized and that might be of interest to students who want a driver's license and the tutors and teachers who work with them. For example, people who are studying for the written (learner's permit) test, either on their own or with the help of a tutor, and whose reading skills might make taking the written test unnecessarily difficult, have two options:

1) They can request the Simplified English examination. This is still a 10-question, multiple-choice written test, but the language and sentence structure are much easier to deal with than the standard test. This test was designed by the Registry in collaboration with the Learning Center for the Deaf, and is available to literacy students or anyone who needs it upon prior request. The branch supervisor of the Registry office at which the test will be taken needs to request the test from the Driver Licensing Section at the main branch of the Registry on Nashua Street. This test is described on page 6 of the Driver's License Manual, available from any Registry office.

2) They can request an oral exam. The office supervisor at any branch office of the Registry has the authority to waive the written exam altogether and arrange for an oral exam. This also requires advance notice, with an explanation of the special circumstances requiring an oral exam, so that arrangements can be made. This option is explained on page 7 of the Driver's License Manual.

For those students whose first language is not English, the learner's permit test

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A.L.R.I. Notes

Mailing List Clarification

In last issue's note regarding the update of the A.L.R.I.'s mailing list, we neglected to mention that all staff at Boston Adult Literacy Initiative programs will automatically continue to receive copies of our newsletter and publicity fliers. That's why there were no renewal forms included with your copies of the last issue. Sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

A.L.R.I. Consultant Search

The A.L.R.I. is eager to increase its "pool" of consultants and would like to hear from anyone who is interested in being available to us as a possible presenter for our mini-courses and colloquia and/or as a provider of on-site technical assistance to programs. We're looking for people with experience in any of the aspects of adult literacy/adult basic education (including, but not limited to, teaching, counseling, and administration). And you don't necessarily have to have done this sort of consulting work before. If you're interested, call or write to Steve Reuys at the A.L.R.I.

"Writers on Writing" Tape Available

With the permission of WGBH, the A.L.R.I. library now has available for loan a videotape copy of their "Writers on Writing" series (1/2" VHS format). The collection of 11 programs, each five minutes or under, features Julius Lester, Marge Piercy, Robert Parker, May Sarton, Sam Cornish, Margo Rey and other well-known writers of adult and childrens' literature talking informally and invitingly about writing, and in some cases reading some of their own work. The series includes people of color, men and women, fiction writers, poets, and essayists from Boston and other parts of Massachusetts. The series aired this past season, a short segment at a time, on public television in Boston and perhaps elsewhere. It has provided inspiration for many readers, writers, and those who aspire to write.

Literacy Core Collection List

James McCullough, A.L.R.I. librarian, is working to develop a "Core Collection List of Literacy/ESL/L1/ABE Resource Materials for Collection Development in a Literacy Library." It's intended for people who want to start a collection and suggests titles in a wide range of areas. To get a copy of this list, either call Sue (232-4695) or write to James at the A.L.R.I.

Minority Volunteer Recruitment

I wish to thank the A.L.R.I. for giving me the opportunity to serve as Volunteer Recruitment Worker from January to May of this year. I was hired to recruit Afro-American and Haitian volunteer tutors to work in the greater Boston area adult learning centers.

I conferred with representatives and members of community service organizations, churches and minority businesses to solicit their participation in the adult literacy effort. Through a direct mail marketing campaign, I outreached to these groups utilizing a flyer, a press release, and public service announcements. The response to my outreach effort was very positive. Eight minority businesses offered to provide volunteer tutors or to donate one of their services as a contribution to the A.L.R.I. program to help adults improve their reading and English-speaking skills.

These eight minority businesses are: Special Effects Photography (James Boykin, owner); Grande Total Image Development Services (Valina Jackson-Gibson, owner); Metro-Serve Computer Company (William Murrell, co-owner); Input Output Computer Services, Inc. (John C. Cain, Jr., manager of staffing and recruitment); Scholastic Review (Nedra Williams, co-owner); Executive Presentation (Margaret Daniels Tyler, owner); Catch Enterprises (Robert Fuller, owner); and Waterstudio Graphix (Russ Waters, owner).

I want to publicly extend my thanks to the above minority businesses for offering to help adults improve themselves. I extend additional thank yous to the adult literacy center coordinators, teachers, and tutors for assisting me with this project.

--Gale Alston

Possible Disruption of Services

We want to alert readers to the possibility of an upcoming disruption in A.L.R.I. services. At the time this newsletter is being prepared, we do not know whether we will be able to remain at our current location for the near future or whether we will be moved to an as yet unknown site. If we do have to move, this will almost certainly cause us to interrupt our delivery of services for some period of time.

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A.L.R.I. Notes

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This situation has come about in the following way: When most of Roxbury Community College moved to its new campus earlier this year, due to the lack of space at the new site, 11 programs remained at the Huntington Ave. campus in the former Administration Building, now called the "RCC Community and Workplace Education Center." At that time we understood that an agreement had been reached between RCC and the Mass. College of Art (which was given control of the building) that would allow us and the other programs to occupy this building until June, 1990, while a search for more permanent space was undertaken. However, in March of this year, the Boston Latin School indicated that it wished to have immediate use of the building for two years while renovations are being made to their school. Obviously, in order for this to happen, the programs currently in the building, including the A.L.R.I., would have to move.

Negotiations continue at this time involving RCC, the BPS, and the state Board of Regents, and a number of articles about the controversy have recently appeared in local papers. Unfortunately we don't yet know how all this will turn out or what effects any decision may have on the short- and long-term future of the A.L.R.I. and the other RCC literacy and community education programs.

Students' Writing

The first issue of the adult student writing magazine, Need I Say More, is now available to the public. This issue contains writings by students at the following programs: Cape Verdean Community House, Cardinal Cushing Center, East Boston Harborside Community School, Haitian Multi-Service Center, Jackson/Mann Community School, Jamaica Plain Community School, Jefferson Park Writing Center, Mujeres Unidas en Accion, and SCALE. Need I Say More is published by the Publishing for Literacy Project, sponsored by the A.L.R.I. and the Public Library of Brookline and funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners. If you would like to participate in the project next year or if you would like copies of this first issue, contact Kona Khasu, at the A.L.R.I., 232-4695.

For Your Information

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(but not the manual) is available in a variety of other languages. I would recommend calling the Registry to find out if the specific language a student wants is available.

If you or someone you know is studying for the driver's license and has any questions about the process, please feel free to call me at the A.L.R.I., and I will be happy to share any information I have with you.

--Helen Jones, A.L.R.I.

Lawyers for Literacy

"As concerned citizens, the attorneys of Massachusetts would like to help in the battle against illiteracy." With this invitation John Callahan, President of the Mass. Bar Association, initiated an MBA "Lawyers for Literacy Task Force," co-chaired by Kevin Light of Choate, Hall and Stewart and myself. The increasing awareness of the crisis in literacy (now defined as basic skills in reading, writing, computation, communication, and problem-solving) in the adult population in Massachusetts has encouraged the Task Force to begin to actively recruit lawyers who can use their varied skills by "adopting" a local adult education program. Lawyers all over the state who have expressed an interest through a recent MBA survey will be asked to respond to a dozen different ways that they can help. Local programs will also be invited to respond with their program and adult learner needs. The MBA and MCAL will "match up" lawyers and programs in a way which will have a major impact on statewide efforts to expand the adult education system to serve more than the 3% now receiving services. For more information please call me at 727-6944 or Melanie Sadler of the MBA at 542-3602.

--Mary Ann Hardenbergh,
Mass. Coalition for
Adult Literacy

Project PLUS News

In October, PBS will be airing "First Things First," a documentary on the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy. The "Learn to Read" series, which uses a phonics-based approach to reading, is currently being shown on Saturdays from noon to 1pm on channel 44. Also, September 8 has been named "National Literacy Day," and 1989 has been proclaimed "The Year of the Young Reader."

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Job Exchange

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Continuing Education Institute needs part-time ESL Instructors for various workplace settings. Call Nancy at 449-4802.

The Irlen Clinic for Perceptual and Learning Development in Cambridge needs: 1) part-time Diagnosticians to screen for scotopic sensitivity syndrome, $15-20/hr, BA required and 2) a Secretary/administrative assistant--5 yrs. experience required. Resume to: Irlen Clinic, 355 Bedford St., Suite 7N, Lexington, MA 02173 attn: Hiring Committee.

Roxbury Community College's new Worker Assistance Center is seeking the following: 1) a full-time Intake/Assessment/Education Specialist and 2) a full-time Career Counselor/Job Developer to coordinate these aspects of the program; salary mid-20's; 3) a part-time ABE Specialist and 4) a part-time ESL Specialist to develop materials and provide class and individual instruction; salary $10,000, 18 hrs/wk. Qualifications: extensive related experience working with persons facing barriers to successful employment due to a low level of education or English language proficiency; for part-time positions, BA degree in related field, and for full-time, Master's degree or BA plus 2 yrs experience. Also, 5) a Secretary--3 yrs experience, training in word processing and secretarial procedures, and good communication skills required, Associate's degree preferred; $13-15,000. And, for a different program, 6) a Coordinator of Workplace Education--Master's degree in related field and 2 yrs experience or Bachelor's degree and 4 yrs; demonstrated managerial experience, interpersonal skills, and ability to deal effectively with labor, business, and the public; experience in ABE and ESL, and proficiency in oral and written expression required. Salary low to mid 30's. Send letter and resume to: Henry Allen, Dean, Program Development and Extended Education, Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120-3400.

Job Seekers: As always, this list may not be completely current by the time you receive it, and you may discover that some positions have already been filled.

ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE INSTITUTE
c/o Roxbury Community College
1234 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02120-3400

ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE INSTITUTE

ALL WRITE NEWS

Sept./Oct. 1988 Volume V Number 2

A Joint Program of Roxbury Community College & the University of Massachusetts at Boston
Located at: 625 Huntington Ave., Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 232-4695

(First article in a 2-part series)

"I Picked That Up From Pam"

by Greg Leeds, A.L.R.I.

One day this past June I visited a community-based literacy class. As a consultant, I had worked with the teacher and students for about five months. The teacher this day was asking the students how he should run the class differently next year. This was the end-of-the-year evaluation. He asked how they felt different now than they did a year ago.

Looking over my notes from that day in June, I find a lot of food for thought in two students' answers. In this first of two articles, I present Merle's feedback. In the second article, to be printed in the next issue, I will present Pam's comments. (All names have been changed at the participants' request.)

Here are my notes on what Merle said:

I'M READING BETTER. CALCULATING BETTER. I CAN TALK TO PEOPLES NOW. (The teacher, Richard, asked, "What do you mean?") I USED TO BE SCARED I'D SAY THE WRONG THING. ("What changed that?" Richard asked. "Why aren't you as scared now?") THE MEETINGS WEDNESDAY NIGHTS HELPED. YOU KNOW, WE SHOULD TALK MORE TO OTHER PEOPLES LIKE THAT SATURDAY, DOWN THERE. I DIDN'T THINK I COULD STAND UP IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLES AND READ. OFTEN WHEN I'M IN FRONT OF PEOPLE I FORGET WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY.

(Focusing on skills, as teachers may, Richard asked, "How has your writing changed?") MY WRITING IS GOOD COMPARED TO

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A.L.R.I. Notes

Where Are We?

At the time this newsletter is going to press, it is fairly likely that an agreement will be signed for the A.L.R.I. (and nine other programs in the RCC Community and Workplace Education Center currently at 625 Huntington Ave.) to be moved on or about Sept. 1 to the former Cotting School building at 241 St. Botolph St., near the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Huntington Ave.

Our mailing address (c/o RCC, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120-3400) will probably remain the same, but we will very likely have a new phone number and will also no longer be reachable via the main RCC phone number. We will try to get word out about our new location and phone number, but we also assume that if you call our old number (232-4695) you'll get the familiar message, "The number you have reached has been disconnected. The new number is _____."

Of course, plans can fall apart and all this may change, so before coming in to the A.L.R.I. for any reason early this fall, we recommend that you try calling first to find out just where we are located. If our phones are out completely, that probably means we're in the process of actually moving, which would be a lousy time to visit us anyway. (There is, however, a fairly good chance that we will have moved by the time you get this.) Things will be very confusing around here for a while, and we're sorry for any inconvenience all this may cause you.

Driver's License Materials

New Driver Ed. materials are available to help ABE & ESL students study for the Learner's Permit written test. Anyone interested in these materials should call Helen Jones at the A.L.R.I.

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I Picked That Up From Pam

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WHAT IT WAS. MY SPELLING IS BETTER. I'M LEARNING TO BREAK UP WORDS. (She then gave an example, the word "IN STRUC TION". Richard asked where she learned this, to break it up, because he later told me, "I never taught her that," and Merle responded:) I PICKED THAT UP FROM PAM (another student in the class). IT USED TO BE A BIG WORD.

* * *

I've learned a lot in these months from working with Merle and Pam and their class. The sentences have a lot of meaning for me.

I'M READING BETTER. CALCULATING BETTER. I CAN TALK TO PEOPLES NOW. I USED TO BE SCARED I'D SAY THE WRONG THING. THE MEETINGS WEDNESDAY NIGHTS HELPED.

The literacy program is working. And Merle knows it.

Every Wednesday night were editorial committee meetings of the Publishing Project which she and Richard had joined at the A.L.R.I. Kona Khasu coordinates this project to create a literary magazine of adult student writing. There were several other students and teachers on the committee. At the meetings, Merle was empowered to judge other writings. And her viewpoints were listened to.

(The community-based organization Richard taught at provided a lot of staff development time and encouraged teacher involvement in various activities. This allowed Richard to invite the whole class to join these activities, too. Merle was one of two students who very often decided to take Richard up on his invitation.)

"I used to be scared I'd say the wrong thing." Merle is not just talking about Wednesday nights. Richard told me, several months ago, that he was trying to apply a teaching technique of increasing the connections between different classes. He was trying to broaden the contact students have with students around the city. Richard had invited other classes from around Boston to visit his class and share their writings (no easy task with schedules and transportation problems and day care and other jobs keeping teachers and students busy). I was able to help coordinate such a meeting. Finally his ABE class was able to meet with an ESL class that was writing about subjects similar to those his class was exploring.

After meeting these students, Merle commented to me about how surprised she was to find students from Cambodia and Puerto Rico, all dealing with the same problems of drugs, children running away, and especially the problem of children saying, "But Mom, all the other kids do...." Merle found out, I believe, that she wasn't alone; she had met people from similar and different places facing the same problems and issues she was.

One major reaction I see as I travel with students to conferences around the city and around the country is how surprised students are when they meet students from other places. Students often hold onto myths that they are the only ones who can't read, or that the way their school is run is the only way schools are run. By meeting students from other places such myths are broken down. Isolation disappears; critical reflection and unity replace it.

Back to Merle's class. I assume her confidence to share her written efforts with other classes came directly out of her own class' process approach to learning writing. Students in her class were given a lot of time to write during class. Rarely were they given assignments. Instead, students were taught how professional writers decide what to write, how they focus on who their audience will be, and how they determine the form the writing will take. The teacher would share his own process by saving his original notes and rough drafts, showing the students his cross-outs and his insertions. He would tell them about the crumpled up pages. Together, Richard and the students would read passages from books that took them behind the scenes, into published writers' workrooms, seeing the writer's craft, her fears, her mistakes, and her rewrites. Hearing about these strains and endeavors surely gave Merle confidence; even the pros had to struggle at it.

Often students would choose a group topic to write about. By deciding on their own topics, students not only learned to select but felt the power to decide. Each student encountered the weight of true literacy, the prerogative of determining what you are going to say.

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I Picked That Up From Pam

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Like professional writers, the students often chose to write about what they were experts on, their own lives. The teacher always gave them time to share their writings and to support each other's work with comments and questions. A lot of time was also spent on publishing. One hour every day, of their two-and-a-half-hour class, was spent writing, sharing and discussing their process. I think such time to choose her words, play with her language, and develop her ideas helped Merle and the other students get over "I USED TO BE SCARED I'D SAY THE WRONG THING." Thus, she was able to: 1) confidently share here writing with other classes, 2) comment on writings at the editorial meetings, and 3) take criticism from other people.

YOU KNOW WE SHOULD TALK MORE TO OTHER PEOPLES LIKE THAT SATURDAY, DOWN THERE. I DIDN'T THINK I COULD STAND UP IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLES AND READ. OFTEN WHEN I'M IN FRONT OF PEOPLE I FORGET WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY.

"That Saturday" refers to the ALI Day, when over 150 students and teachers from the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative met to discuss their concerns and celebrate their literacy.

Having had the opportunity to read her writings with people she knew in her own class, having published her writing in the school's magazine, having shared her writings with students from other classes, and having supported others in the same struggle, Merle now found herself at the ALI day standing up on stage, in front of a sea of strangers, doing what she thought she could never do: reading to them.

I DIDN'T THINK I COULD STAND UP IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLES AND READ.

What Merle says challenges me. So often I judge my own success as a teacher predominantly on how well students score on reading tests. We have been focusing on the wrong things as teachers, defining literacy as only test skills, not defining it as students teaching each other, nor reading in front of others. An accurate end of the year evaluation finds out not only if the students can perform in front of an unresponding proctor, but how students perform in their community or in front of 150 people.

Dalita Gutierrez says, "If programs don't deal with issues of self-esteem and power in the community, a student can leave a program able to read and write, but still feel worthless and powerless." When Merle heard all the Board of Directors of her school, the coordinator of her school, the heads of the Commonwealth Literacy Campaign, state legislators, city councillors, and other politicians, but only two students speak at her own school's Recognition Ceremony, Merle commented, "I don't know why they had them doing all the speaking; they already know how to speak."

What I know about Merle is this much. She is a mother of seven, grandmother, and survivor of southern lynching and northern housing projects. She went to school until she was in third grade and then she went to work. She is now in a basic literacy class. She says, "I didn't think I could stand up in front of other peoples and read." And now she is beginning to critically address her educational community.

Where has her bravery come from? It's complicated to figure out how somebody who others call illiterate (but who hates being called illiterate) can end up being able to read in front of teachers and students. I have a hunch. Merle would often go to teacher education colloquiums and workshops. A.L.R.I. workshops and other conferences were announced in her class. Merle said she often wouldn't understand everything at these training workshops or colloquiums, but nonetheless I think this is where something may have happened.

Once in a while she was asked her opinion there. When this happened, the teachers present would listen to Merle. Intently. Teachers often, when given the chance, want (and need) to hear students' solutions and especially students' points of view on teaching situations and teacher perceptions. As teachers, we so often work in a black box, not knowing what is going on in our students' minds as we teach. This can be disheartening. It can create tension. Hearing students speak on issues of education can be what we need to put this tension at ease. Honest feedback from fellow adults is precious.

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I Picked That Up From Pam

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Teachers would listen to Merle.

In the professional workshops, Merle had been admitted to a club--a club of people, teachers, who talked about her education. Even if she couldn't grasp everything that happened at teacher trainings (who could?), she wasn't treated paternalistically. Nobody told her, "Don't worry dear, we'll take care of you, we'll teach you." She now was included. She learned about her condition by hearing teachers talk educational theory and found out how other programs were run.

Alice Walker was once asked, what good did the Civil Rights movement do since "little was gained materially"? She responded,

> What good did it do? Would it have been better, as some have suggested, to leave the Negro people as they were, unawakened, unallied with one another, unhopeful about what to expect for their children in some future world?
>
> I do not think so. If knowledge of my condition is all the freedom I get from a "freedom movement," it is better than unawareness, forgottenness, and hopelessness, the existence that is like the existence of a beast. ("The Civil Rights Movement: What Good Was It?"; 1967)

So too with the students in this class, both black and white. Merle is now more allied with other students and has a clear knowledge of her educational condition. I'm beginning to understand what gave her the nerve to read aloud in public to 150 people. Merle knows the score now.

MY WRITING IS GOOD COMPARED TO WHAT IT WAS. MY SPELLING IS BETTER.

The process approach to teaching writing described previously showed students the writer's craft. In addition, I had watched Richard take 20 minutes of each class and teach phonics, sight words, and spelling rules. He taught these in response to students' interests or patterns he noticed in the students' writings or readings. He did this quite meaningfully and sensitively, never using tests, always using a transitional or invented spelling approach. But this topic will be another article.

I'M LEARNING TO BREAK UP WORDS. I PICKED THAT UP FROM PAM.

So much seems to be packed into these words. Pam taught Merle (and presumably others) a skill--how to break up words into their syllables. The teacher often asked students to give lessons. The teacher would suggest it frequently. It was always informal. Lessons were on anything and everything. I saw one student show how she revised a writing piece and how she decided to cut out sections of that piece. I saw Richard encourage another student to give a lesson on how she memorized spelling lists by taking one word at a time, covering it up and writing it, uncovering and checking it, writing it over and over, moving on to the next word and then integrating the whole list together.

Whenever Richard discovered a student successfully using some learning or writing process, he would ask them to share that process with the rest of the class--celebrating what students were doing and encouraging a peer support or peer teaching environment. From this, students gained more control in the class and developed their own self worth.

Richard had been surprised (and happy) to find out, in this end-of-the-year evaluation, that Merle had learned a skill he hadn't taught. But such learning was a natural outcome of the atmosphere he helped create. Richard believed strongly in such an atmosphere and was always struggling to come to grips with those abstract Freirian concepts of learning circles and learning from students. He felt like he was beginning to apply these concepts, but he felt like it was only beginning.

I watched culture circles, sharing and teaching, happening on other levels. I watched Merle informally lecture the class about lynchings in the south, telling the class about the day she went out into the field to find her brother hanged. Doug, another student in the class, shared job openings from the old age home he worked in. Eventually, Pam, a timid woman, surprised herself; she pushed past her husband's resistance, got over her shyness and applied for a job there. Doug, because he had told Pam about the opening, not only got the satisfaction of getting a friend a job and

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Job Exchange

The Adult Literacy Resource Institute needs a full-time ABE Specialist to provide training, consulting, and other services to adult literacy/adult basic education programs in the Boston area. Advanced degree in adult education or related field or equivalent background; 3 yrs. experience teaching ABE, some in community-based programs; experience in curriculum development, teacher-training, & consulting in one or more of these areas: reading, writing, math, 1st-language literacy, ESL, counseling, GED or EDP required. $21,955-27,940 starting. (Position conditional on funding.) Letter and resume to: Personnel Office, Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120-3400.

The Boston Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services seeks a Director of Adult Literacy. Six years relevant experience or combination of education and experience required. Educational development experience, demonstrated ability to work with community-based organizations, excellent communication skills preferred. Boston residency required. Salary high 20's-low 30's. Letter and resume to: Personnel Office, MOJCS, 43 Hawkins St., Boston, MA 02114.

SCALE has the following part-time openings: 1) ABE/GED Counselor (14 hrs, am & 1 eve.); 2) ABE Teachers (am & pm); 3) Typing Teacher (pm); 4) Clerical Aide (pm, bilingual preferred), and 5) Outreach/Clerical Aide (am). Call Betty Stone 625-1335.

The Community Learning Center needs: 1) a full-time ESL Teacher/Counselor--bilingual (preferably Haitian Creole or Spanish), experience working with adults, ability to work days & evenings, BA or comparable experience or training required; Haitian bicultural, experience with adult ESL preferred; $22,923; and 2) part-time ESL Teachers--adult ESL experience required; $13/hr & paid prep. time. Resume to: Sally Waldron, CLC, 614 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Jobs for Youth needs: 1) a full-time Alternative School Instructor and 2) a full-time GED Instructor. College degree, 1 yr. experience teaching urban youth required; certification in secondary level subject required for #1, and background in reading, math, or special education preferred for #2. Contact Ephraim at 338-0815.

ODWIN Learning Center needs a part-time Chemistry Teacher. Call Mary at 282-5320.

VOICES needs part-time ESL Instructors for on-site workplace training programs. Call Fern at 324-1284.

Operation Bootstrap in Lynn needs: 1) a part-time ABE Instructor for mornings and evenings, and 2) a part-time Instructor for a computer-assisted reading program. Call 599-8543.

O.I.C. in Boston seeks a full-time ABE Instructor to teach basic literacy and GED prep. in a computer-assisted environment. Call Clarence Donelan at 442-2424.

The North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner needs a part-time Reading Teacher to implement a new basic literacy program using the PALS system of computer-assisted instruction. 25 hrs/wk, $11.58/hr. BA required, certification or experience teaching reading preferred. Call Patricia Lambirth at 632-2000.

JOB SEEKERS: As always this list may not be current by the time you receive it, and you may find that some positions have already been filled.

I Picked That Up From Pam

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being listened to, but also the company gave him a $300 finder's fee for doing the head hunting.

I PICKED THAT UP FROM PAM. IT USED TO BE A BIG WORD.

I am sure it is significant that the word Merle chose to show Richard, breaking it into syllables, was "IN STRUC TION." She had learned to see the component parts of INSTRUCTION. Pam had shown her the syllables of the word. Merle had learned about the parts of instruction at teacher ed colloquiums. Pam had shown her that instruction could come from another student. She learned in class how professional writers learn to write. She found out, meeting other students, how they were instructed. She found out that she could instruct 150 people, reading in front of them. IN STRUC TION. It used to be a big word.

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Recent Additions to the A.L.R.I. Library Compiled by James McCullough

(*circulating and non-circulating copies **non-circulating copy only ***reference only)

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A.L.R.I. Notes
continued from page 1

Staff Changes

We want to wish a fond farewell to Barbara Neumann and Vanessa Shannon, both of whom have left the A.L.R.I. recently. Barbara had been coordinating our special project on Critical Thinking, which ended on June 30, and she is now going to be working at the Jefferson Park Writing Center in Cambridge. Vanessa, one of our ABE specialists, has accepted a position teaching English at Middlesex Community College in Bedford, but she's also agreed to continue working as a consultant for the A.L.R.I. and will be presenting her mini-course on Counseling Adults for us again this fall. We want to thank both Vanessa and Barbara for all the work they've done for the A.L.R.I. and we wish them the best for the future. We also want to thank Carol Camlin for the administrative support work she did for us earlier this year and congratulate her on her new position with one of RCC's workplace education programs.

And last, but not least, we want to welcome Lenore Balliro to the A.L.R.I.; she is our new ESL/Bilingual Specialist!

Article Request Address Correction

In our statement of the A.L.R.I. newsletter Editorial Policy in our last issue, the address to which material for the newsletter should be sent was inadvertently left unchanged. Articles and other submissions for the newsletter should, of course, be sent to me, Steve Reuys, A.L.R.I., c/o Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120-3400.

Mini-Course and Colloquium Schedule

The A.L.R.I. would like to announce its plans for the coming year regarding our series of free education and training events for staff at adult literacy/adult basic education programs. As usual, the schedule for the first half of the year is more definite than that for the second half, and, of course, items listed here are subject to change. We will continue to send out publicity fliers several weeks before each event, so you should be receiving more information on each of them at the appropriate time. Please pay particular attention as to the location of each event, and please call us if you have any questions about our mini-courses or colloquia.

1) Mini-Courses--During the first half of the year we will continue to offer a number of mini-courses intended primarily for staff who are new to teaching, to working with adults, or to teaching in a particular area, as well as staff who have more experience but would like to learn new approaches and share ideas with other teachers. These courses are open to all staff (including aides), to volunteers, and to students at programs and others who may be interested in adult education as a career.

Probable Fall/Winter Mini-Courses:
Teaching Reading & Writing to Adults--presenter Greg Leeds, starting in Oct.
Counseling Adults--presenter Vanessa Shannon, starting in Oct.
Teaching Basic Math (probably including a math brush-up for teachers)--possible presenter Mary Jane Schmitt, starting in Nov.
Teaching ESL--presenter A.L.R.I. ESL/Bilingual Specialist, starting Nov.-Dec.
Issues in Teaching Adults (this might include, for example, retention, working with multi-level classes, working with non-native English speakers in ABE class, male/female dynamics in class, integrating basic skills with holistic/experiential learning, etc.), starting Nov.-Dec.

Possible Winter/Spring Mini-Courses:
Cultural Awareness for Adult Ed. Staff
Administrative Issues in Adult Ed.
Teaching Writing/Writing Workshop for Staff
Other courses on reading, ESL, counseling

2) Colloquia--Colloquia we offer this year may deal with the following topics: Using Oral History in Adult Education, Providing Childcare at Adult Education Programs, Testing and Assessment in ABE and ESL, the New GED, Translation and other Language Minority Issues, and a debate on the Pros and Cons of Unionizing at Adult Education Programs.

Staff Development Survey

Decisions on what we should offer are based on our experience thus far in providing these sorts of services and on suggestions and ideas received from program staff. The survey on the next page provides another opportunity for you to let us know what you think. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and then return it to us--it will help us plan for the future. Thanks!

continued on next page

A.L.R.I. Notes

continued from previous page

"Need I Say More" Update

Adult literacy students are invited to submit their writings for publication in Need I Say More, the quarterly magazine of adult literacy student writings sponsored by the A.L.R.I. and the Public Library of Brookline. The works will be considered for publication in the third issue of the magazine, scheduled for distribution in October. The deadline for submission of writings is September 30, 1988. (When submitting your writings, please send us a short paragraph about yourself.) Send writings to Kona Khasu at the A.L.R.I.

The All Write News is published every two months by the A.L.R.I. All signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and are not meant to reflect the views of the A.L.R.I. or its sponsoring institutions or funders. Send all material to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I. The deadline for the next issue is October 15.

A.L.R.I. Word Puzzle

We don't want you to forget about us while we're moving into our new home, so here's a puzzle composed of words containing the letters in our name (A.L.R.I.). Answers below.

1. Having hay fever. A_L_R_I_
2. Repetition of initial consonant sounds. A_L_____R_____I_____
3. Like Animal Farm. A_L_____RI_____
4. Type of equation. AL_____R_I_____
5. Method for problem-solving. AL_____RI_____
6. Change in velocity. A_____L_R_____I_____
7. Concern for others. AL_R_I_____
8. Farmer A_____L_____R_____I_____
9. Modification AL_____R_____I_____
10. Painting at the front of a church. AL_____R_I_____
11. Decorated like a Moorish building in Spain. AL_____RI_____
12. Person who "cries wolf." AL_R_I_____
13. Sprightliness. AL_____RI_____
14. Egyptian city. AL_____RI_____
15. A rounded mass. A_____L_____R_____I_____

1. Allergic 2. Alliteration 3. Allegoric
4. Algebraic 5. Algorithm 6. Acceleration
7. Altruism 8. Agriculturalist 9. Alteration
10. Altarpiece 11. Alhambric 12. Alarmist
13. Alacrity 14. Alexandria 15. Aggiomeration

by James McCullough

A.L.R.I. Staff Development Survey September, 1988

1) What mini-courses would you or your program like to see the A.L.R.I. offer in the future?

2) What colloquia or one-session workshops would you or your program like to see the A.L.R.I. offer in the future?

3) What are the best days and times for you to attend mini-courses, colloquia, or workshops at the A.L.R.I.?

4) If you have not attended A.L.R.I. training events but would have liked to, what were the barriers to your attending?

5) If you have not attended A.L.R.I. events and have not wanted to, can you tell us why?

6) What other types of staff development would you want the A.L.R.I. to offer that we are not now providing?

Please return to: Steve Reuys, A.L.R.I., c/o Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120 THANK YOU!

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For Your Information

RCC Caribbean Focus Schedule

The Caribbean Focus Work Group at Roxbury Community College has scheduled a number of events for this fall. Call 541-5314 (bilingual--Spanish/English) for more information on any of these events.

"Latinoamerica Despierta: Art, Literature and Identity in Latin America Today"--
Co-sponsored by Mass. College of Art & Roxbury Community College.
All dates are Thursdays.

A. Events at R.C.C. in the new auditorium--11:30 am. (Luncheons after these events at 1pm; call for reservations.)
--Sept. 29 Central America & the Caribbean: Claribel Alegria (Nicaraguan poet), Gerardo Mosquera (Cuban art critic), Norberto James (Dominican poet)
--Nov. 10 Culture & Independence in Puerto Rico: Luis Rafael Sanchez (Puerto Rican writer), Juan Sanchez (Puerto Rican painter), Martin Espada (Puerto Rican poet)

B. Events at Mass. College of Art (621 Huntington Ave.)--6:00 pm.
--Sept. 22 Latin American Cultural History: Eduardo Galeano, Rita Eder, Tino Villanueva
--Oct. 6 Latin America in North America: Guillermo Gomez-Pena (Mexican artist & writer), Frank Espada (Puerto Rican photographer), Luis Jimenez (Chicano sculptor), Gregorio Rivera (Chicano computer artist)
--Oct. 13 The Enigma of Chile: Ariel Dorfman, Eugenio Dittborn, Marjorie Agosin
--Oct. 20 Exile: Augusto Monterroso, Carlos Capelan, Francisco Mendez-Diez (Cuban painter & RCC professor)
--Oct. 27 Personal Metaphor: Isaac Goldemberg, Liliana Porter, Rosario Morales
--Nov. 3 The Politics of Culture: Julio Ortega (Peruvian author), Ernesto Cardenal (Nicaragua), Alfredo Jaar (Chilean visual artist), Alan West (Cuban poet)
--Nov. 17 Nationalism & Latin Americanism: Manuel Puig, Luis Felipe Noe, Federico de Morais, Wilfredo Chiesa

(Also planned are three concerts to take place at the Villa Victoria, dates to be announced, and a forum at RCC on the Oct. 25 anniversary of the US invasion of Grenada.)

ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE INSTITUTE
c/o Roxbury Community College
1234 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02120-3400

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

ALL WRITE NEWS

November/December 1988 Volume V Number 3

A Joint Program of Roxbury Community College & the University of Massachusetts at Boston
Located at: 241 St. Botolph Street, Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 424-7947

"Pleased to Meet You"

by Alison Holness

I stood disconsolately in a small group on one side of the crowded Director's office. It was a farewell party for a colleague whom I hardly knew, so, while holding the plastic wine glass and the paper napkin, I was pondering how soon I could politely take my leave. While I was mentally pre-occupied with possible strategies, my interest was triggered by a voice saying, "I'd like you to meet So Yin and Xin Li. They hve just arrived from China and will be studying with us for a year." I stared into the surprisingly confident eyes of a young man and woman; we shook hands and then the inevitable occurred. Members of the group began firing friendly questions at our Chinese guests, questions about their homes in China and their areas of study while in America. Finally, due to the Chinese' poor comprehension and the Americans' frustration and embarrassment at not understanding the answers to their questions, the Americans launched into lengthy stories of their own experiences with Chinese cooking and eating with chopsticks. During this time, the Chinese visitors stood in bewildered silence; their English language skills which had seemed so excellent in China and as a TOEFL score were no match for conversational speed American English plus idioms.

My mind went back to my Chinese physician friend of the previous academic year. We had enjoyed lunch together on several occasions but we never really knew each other because of my lack of Chinese and his inadequate facility with the English language. Several times I had almost offered to help him with English but each time I never actually said it because I was afraid of

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"The Class Supported Me": One Student's Evaluation of Her Literacy Class

by Greg Leeds, A.L.R.I.

[This is the second in a two-part series of articles about an end-of-the-year evaluation conducted by students and teacher of a community-based literacy class. The author visited this class as a consultant for three months prior to the evaluation and has written these articles based on two students' feedback. The first article, "I Picked That Up From Pam," focused on Merle's evaluation of the class. This article deals with some of Pam's evaluation. A longer version of the article, including other students' evaluations, will be published elsewhere at a future date.]

Pam used to tear up her letters to her son everytime she made a mistake. During the evaluation she said, "I don't hesitate now to write a letter to Ricky. If I make a mistake, I just cross it out. I don't say, 'Oh, I'm such a fool; I shouldn't have written the letter to my son.'" Her feedback provides me with much insight into what can make a literacy program successful.

Pam applied for her first job when another student pushed her to give it a try. The job came after ten years of thinking she couldn't emotionally handle working and her husband's disapproval of it.

"Rejected" by her financially strapped parents when she was a young girl, Pam was adopted by another family, and later was rejected again by her original brothers and sisters. Pam is a survivor. She says this rejection has made her very insecure.

Pam was earnest and matter-of-fact as she gave her assessment of the class.

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Pleased to Meet You

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hurting his pride. The intimation that his language skills needed improvement may not have been construed in a very positive light. One day I made up my mind to make my offer. There was so much I wanted to learn about his work in China and I could no longer bear the frustration of our inadequate communication. Thus, with a determined step I strode into the cafeteria and looked for my friend. He was not there; in fact, he was never again in the Medical Center because he had returned to China. I was mortified; I had the ability to help make his life in the U.S.A. easier and more meaningful, yet, due to my own reticence I had never given him the opportunity.

So, here it was, a new academic year, new Chinese visiting scholars and me, all standing wondering what to say next. Here was another chance for me to help; I was determined not to let this opportunity pass me by. I heard myself saying, "I am wondering whether you'd like a little help with English, and in understanding America. I'm sure it is all rather different now that you are actually here, different from how you imagined it when you were in China." To my immense relief, our Chinese guests accepted with alacrity. I was still not too certain of my ability to meet their needs, however, so I decided to leave myself a possible way out. "Let's just meet once and we can talk about your language needs and I can explain whether or not I can help. Then, if we each decide that it would be worthwhile for you, we can set up regular meetings." This was the inauspicious beginning of one of the most interesting years in my working life; in fact, it is still continuing. It began with two Chinese students, and now, fourteen months later, I have five. The number of "students" seemed to increase almost exponentially; each one appeared to have a "friend" who also needed help: "Please, could Mar Ag also come to our meetings too?" This is where the content of my short ESL tutoring course at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute came to the rescue; I remembered that these situations are common and so I was prepared to handle them.

One of my first practical discoveries was that there is no apparent correlation between an individual's ability to speak, write and comprehend English. One of my students was excellent at written exercises and essays, yet, when he spoke, his vocabulary and grammar seemed to leave him. Another was very good at speaking while writing left much to be desired. Each of my students up to the current time has great difficulty with listening comprehension; with the written word they show far greater facility. I knew that I had problems. If each student was to get maximum benefit from our time together I would have to divide them into groups, so I had three groups, with one student who knew hardly any English at all having individual instruction.

I was very fortunate; my students were older, adult professionals, involved in different areas of medical care in mainland China. As a sociologist I had a wonderfully interesting year learning from them about Chinese society while they practiced spoken English. We explored the evolution of the barefoot doctor, the integration of Western and Traditional Medicine, the political ideologies of the old and new China, the structure and functioning of the family and the changes brought about by recent legislation, and we discussed the differences in life-style between the urban and rural areas of China. We shared and entered into each other's worlds. I explained to my Chinese friends our own societal successes and failures here in the U.S.A. We read articles on issues from "AIDS" to "The Poverty of the Single Parent." We visited museums, the ocean, ice-cream parlors and went skiing, and at one point in the relationship, I became a driving instructor. I was introduced to Chinese poetry while my Chinese friends gained vicarious pleasure from viewing the city of London from Westminster Bridge in the early morning and taking a sleigh-ride through woods on a snowy evening.

It has proved to be an enlightening year for me; I have seen American society through the eyes of visitors. Sometimes I needed to correct their misperceptions, but at other times I had cause to review my own acceptance of some facets of American life. It has taught me to truly appreciate our freedom of speech and of travel. I no longer give lip-service to this; I truly mean it because I have encountered people from a land where such privileges are allowed to few members of the population.

Relationships with mainland Chinese take time to develop; trust comes slowly and it is vital that they do not loose face. Thus the first homework assignments were handed in almost perfect or were "forgotten," but

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Job Exchange

Job Seekers: As always, this list may not be completely current by the time you receive it, and you may discover that some positions have already been filled. We encourage you to come in to the A.L.R.I. and look at our Job Openings book for more current information.

Also, MAACE (the Massachusetts Association for Adult and Continuing Education) operates a computerized job bank of job openings in this field. Anyone can list a job, but to receive a print-out of current job listings you must be a member of MAACE. To list a job send the information to MAACE Job Bank, P.O. Box 414, Newton Centre, MA 02159. Members seeking job listings should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the same address. To join MAACE, write to P.O. Box 49, Somerville, MA 02144.

* * * * * * * * *

The **Haitian Multi-Service Center** is interviewing now for **ESL/Civics Teachers** to begin in January. Beginning and intermediate levels. 15 hrs/wk, $10.50/hr. Call Carol Chandler at 436-2848.

ABCD is looking for an **Education Coordinator** for their Learning Center. Experience in program management and staff supervision, experience with competency-based approaches, MA in education required. Call Zoila Diaz at 357-6000.

The **Boston Workplace Education Collaborative** at Roxbury Community College has a number of openings: 1) a full-time **Educational Counselor**; 2) a full-time **ABE/Basic Skills Specialist/Teacher**; 3) two part-time **ESL Instructors**; 4) two part-time **ABE/Basic Skills Instructors**; and 5) two part-time **ABE/Advanced Skills/GED Instructors**. Degree in education or related field or equivalent background, and relevant experience required. Salary low $20's full-time; $24/hr for up to 18 hrs/wk part-time. Persons of color and bilingual/bicultural persons strongly encouraged to apply. Send letter and resume to: Personnel Office, Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120.

Local 26 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union seeks a part-time **ESL Teacher/Advocate**. Minimum 1 yr. ESL teaching experience, experience teaching immigrants not literate in their first language, curriculum development experience required; bilingual/bicultural background preferred. 20 hrs/wk; $15/hr and full benefits; possibly higher salary and/or full-time after Jan. 1. Call Elise LaRose at 423-3335 or 864-6841.

The **Brockton Adult Learning Center** is looking for a full-time **Workplace Literacy Instructor**. 3 yrs ESL teaching experience, including some with adults, familiarity with current ESL curriculum development research required; MA preferred. $20,130-34,7475. Call Linda Faria Braun at 580-7475.

The **Citywide Education Coalition** seeks a part-time **Writer/Researcher** to work as a team member of public education reform organization. BA with training in education or related field or 3-5 yrs. experience writing on education issues required. 15 hrs/wk, $15/hr. Send resume to: Paula Georges, CWEC, 37 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111.

Pleased to Meet You

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gradually trust developed and assignments requiring genuine correction began to appear. Discussion reached a personal meaningful level. My help was sought on issues unrelated to language study, and now, we feel that we are friends with a new openness and caring between us. One vitally important rule which I have learned while working with Mainland Chinese is to maintain absolute confidentiality; never discuss one with another or mention anything which may be construed as the opinion or view of one of the others. This requires a good memory and a true commitment to the bonds which develop between the teacher and each individual student.

My original enthusiasm to learn Chinese was somewhat dampened two weeks ago when I requested that my Chinese friend "go through the yellow door." I am not certain what I actually said, and it is perhaps best if I don't find out. From my friend's startled reaction I'm sure it wasn't what polite Chinese say to each other in normal everyday parlance. Thus, I have decided to remain primarily a teacher for my Chinese friends and to leave the student role for another time!

* * * * * * * * *

Alison Holness, Ph.D., is a sociologist teaching at a higher ed. institution in Mass.

The Class Supported Me

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RICHARD (the teacher): In what way have you changed since the class began last year?
PAM: If people can stand on their own two feet, they've really accomplished something. I can associate with people. I can survive alone now. I can make it without my husband.
RICHARD: Did the class contribute to this change?
PAM: The class supported me in different ways. Counseling helped too. In this class, it's helped to see how the others survive and also to see different people's lives. I used to think I had to be a doctor or a nurse to feel good about myself. My family must have told me that. I've made better friends outside my family now. I had to leave my family to find it out.

I'm not afraid I'll fail. This class gives me the confidence to try again. The class wasn't like failing--you didn't get marked. You had other chances. I thought I'd never have a second chance--that's the way it was in other classes.
RICHARD: How do you feel about your reading?
PAM: I feel much better about my reading. I feel much better about everything.
RICHARD: How about your writing?
PAM: Better too. If I make a mistake, I just cross it out. Like you said, writers write twenty pages before they get one that they like. It's surprising, when I do that, I don't make many mistakes. If I do make mistakes, I don't say, "Oh I'm such a fool..." Before I used to throw out the whole thing. I find a lot of people do that. It's interesting that people have just as many phobias no matter how much education they have...

* * * * * * * * *

Often Pam and I would talk after her class when she gave me a ride home. She drove hesitatingly but felt proud that the car was her own. Pam's evaluation reminds me of those car rides and the three months I observed her class.

"If people can stand on their own two feet, they've really accomplished something. I can associate with people....It's helped to see how the others survive...."

The class developed their literacy by studying issues together. While discussing these issues, they were able to support each other and share their lives.

The students learned that they could be experts and a teacher could be a student. While the class studied problems of parenting, Richard, not yet a father, learned from his classroom full of parents. Richard acted as a facilitator and offered his view-points, but the students proposed solutions that fit their own lives. Instead of Richard helping them out, the class was standing "on their own two feet."

I have often been told, "Don't let students bring up problems that the teacher is not prepared to deal with." I now see the weakness of such a stand. The students are well equipped to deal with their problems; they have been dealing with them for years.

More importantly, it is these problems that we are not prepared to deal with that end up keeping students from coming to class. Attendance problems in Adult Basic Education (ABE) are often due to the difficulties present in our students' lives: lack of day care, depression, drugs, their runaway kids. If the class becomes a place where problems can be addressed, then attending class is a route to solving problems.

continued on next page

Creating a Supportive Environment: Seven Suggestions from Pam's Class

Pam's honest feedback shows us what was most valued by the students. Here are seven of the most important conclusions I've reached based on Pam's evaluation.

1) It's important for teachers and students to realize that mistakes are a natural part of the learning and writing process. Even professional writers and "educated people" make mistakes. You're not stupid if you make a mistake and you don't need to throw the writing out.

2) Literacy can be developed by studying issues.

3) When the teacher knows less than the students about a subject, a lot of learning can go on. Students will gain self-respect by being the experts and will learn to work on their problems together (united).

4) Studying issues of concern to students and having a class act as a support group can help alleviate attendance problems.

5) Deeper analysis of an issue can arise from taking an action around the issue. Publishing student writings and mailing letters is a great first action.

6) A safe and supportive class environment can strengthen a study of an issue. It is important to make broader connections during a study, to realize that class members may be in the situation we are discussing, and to not blame the victim.

7) A great way for teachers to evaluate their class is to interview the students.

The Class Supported Me

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Otherwise, attending class can actually be a barrier.

On the day that Pam came in distraught over her husband and son physically abusing each other *and her*, Ruth (another student) offered Pam her home to stay in. *I can make it without my husband. The class supported me in different ways. It's helped to see how the others survive....*

A few weeks after Pam was abused, Richard gave her articles to read on violence against women and guidebooks on her options. Pam only looked at the books but the class and teacher had responded to her. Problems were dealt with. People came to class with their problems instead of staying home with them.

As researchers tell us again and again, students read at a much higher level when they are familiar with and interested in the subject. By studying their self-chosen issues in a group, and for two or three months--a serious amount of time--students were able to deeply analyze and do something about the problems. The group wrote articles and published a guidebook for other students entitled *You are not alone: A survival guide for parents and others*. Pam's words ring in this title.

Taking action, writing, came not only out of study and analysis, but out of the safe and supportive environment the teacher developed. The teacher didn't criticize or blame the students for their problems but rather provided an atmosphere free of condemnation.

Touchy Issues

Early on in the year, the class chose to study drug abuse. Another teacher cautioned Richard when addressing the topic of drugs. "Would your students feel comfortable saying they had a drug problem or would they fear that the class would condemn the drug users? What would happen to the open, supportive, safe environment then?"

Before addressing the problem of drugs, Richard decided to broaden the discussion and lead a brainstorm about addictions in general. The class came up with everything from cravings for coffee to sticking with an abusive lover. A sense of understanding began to develop, allowing the analysis of the drug situation in their neighborhoods to go forward within a safe environment. Instead of just condemning an individual drug user, students came up with their own more inclusive analysis of neighborhood conditions.

It is necessary, for the study of any local issue (housing, parenting, drugs), to recognize that the class members themselves are a part of the situation.

It is necessary to make connections. It was necessary for Pam to see that professional writers make mistakes so that she wouldn't blame herself and throw out her writing. In the same way, when students see their own lack of decent education in a broader social framework and understand the pervasiveness of illiteracy and where it comes from, they don't blame themselves and don't think they can't learn.

I used to think I had to be a doctor or a nurse to feel good about myself. My family must have told me that. I've made better friends outside my family now. I had to leave my family to find it out.

Pam's past school experiences and her family had taught her not to feel good about herself--to feel she was inferior. By not letting her get a job, her husband had reinforced this. Then she saw her fellow students "all in the same boat," as classmate Merle would say, getting their problems out and doing something about them.

Students Taking Action

She saw Doug, a quiet man who in the beginning had nothing to write about, ask for help writing a letter to his boss and his town hall. The letter was asking them to pave the road outside the nursing home he worked at--the potholes were wrecking his car. Doug came up with this idea three weeks after the program coordinator had asked the class to write letters to Governor Dukakis and state representatives, requesting they keep supporting funding for literacy programs. Richard saw writing Dukakis as an imposition from the coordinator directed at unlistening "high officials." He not only thought the letters would be ineffective, but thought the letter writing was misleading the students into thinking the letters would work. But the letters did work. Not on Governor Dukakis, but on Doug and Pam.

Doug and Pam were inspired to reflect on what else needed to be changed. The letter to Dukakis had helped inspire Doug to write his boss. Knowing that he *could* act, Doug gained the insight that he could have an effect, that his ideas counted, and with that a furthering of what Freire might call critical

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A Modest Proposal For Evaluating Students

by Yvonne O'Moore-Patience

During the past several years that I have been reading the "All Write News" I do not believe I have seen any writer come to grips with the most difficult problem in adult basic education, that which is faced alike by students, teachers, program administrators and funders: measuring student learning.

Students want to know how they are progressing. Teachers, too, need to know where students are making strides and where they need help; and, yes, funders have a right to know if students are making gains. But the way things are now, we are all frustrated; none of us gets the information we need, and we teachers are being driven crazy with time-consuming paperwork which no one uses.

I know I am not the only person concerned about this. I have talked with other teachers around town. And I have attended a conference or two, so I know that "measuring student progress" is a hot topic at the state and national levels. I have heard the arguments about how we should use competency-based measurements or how we should use standardized measures of grade level achievement, or how we should just count whether or not students achieved their own learning goals. I have heard how the funders and policy-makers need to be able to show that they aren't wasting our money. I have heard how we need to know which programs work and which don't. And I know that we have to test the claims that this program can help someone achieve five grade levels in only 35 hours, and that one can do it in 15.

I am sympathetic to all these concerns. And I agree with everyone that something needs to be done. The problem is that I haven't heard any good solutions. So, if you'll bear with me, I have a simple, back-to-basics proposal to offer which I think can get us out of the muddle we're stuck in.

To get right to the point, we should give students letter grades. That's right: A,B,C, and D. A for excellent, B for good, C for average, D for poor. (I don't think we should use E, however, because adults have usually failed too many times before they get to our programs.) I am sure that except for those of my colleagues who, like me, have taught elementary school for many years, the virtues of this proposal are not readily apparent; so let me tell you about them:

1. Everyone understands letter grades. Adult students who went through schools in this country, and some who didn't, know exactly what each one means; so do teachers and program administrators. Letter grades don't have to be explained to legislators and other policy makers, either.

2. Those who like standardized tests can use them; those who don't won't have to. Those who like those little competencies can use them, too. Any measure can be used, and boiled down to this simple, universal evaluation: A,B,C,D.

3. The control for evaluation is where it should be, in the mind of the teacher. Using letter grades, the teacher does not give up her rightful authority to JUDGE whether or not students are learning anything.

4. Students know right where they stand; they don't have to look at such rubbish as "illiterate," "marginally literate" or "literate"; they don't have to seek teacher interpretation of "raw score," "standard score" and "percentile."

5. This system has worked for years in schools. Funders do not come knocking at school superintendents' or principals' doors demanding to know how many "positive outcomes" they have had this semester. When they meet a student in a classroom, or at a public function, and the student says "I'm an "A" student, sir," or "Well, Ms., I'm afraid I'm just a "C" student," that's a clear and honest measure of progress. And we all know that "A" students go to Ivy League schools and "D" students don't go to college or to sophisticated training programs, so using letter grades we can clearly report "outcomes" to funders.

Now, I am aware that this raises the questions of whether or not adults should have report cards. And I have given this a lot of thought. My conclusion is that they should, and yes, that they should come out four times during the school year. The adult students I have taught like to see things down in black and white on paper. When they have done a good job--and most of my students do--they want to know it and get praise just like everybody else. And so I think they deserve to have report cards. Of course, because they are adults, they shouldn't have to take them home to have them signed (although many of my students do, in fact, take their report cards home to show their children!)

Another thorny issue is whether or not adult students should be graded on the curve. Here, too, I say they should. We must not forget that

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For Your Information

AIDS Safety Net Parties

The AIDS Action Committee and the ABCD Health Services Department have come up with an interesting new approach to fighting AIDS--Safety Net Parties. Modeled on the concept of Tupperware parties, Safety Net Parties are hosted and facilitated by community women for friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The parties are designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for women to discuss AIDS and how they can protect themselves from infection.

Party facilitators are responsible for leading the parties, presenting the informational activities and encouraging discussion. Facilitators are not "AIDS experts," but rather are concerned members of the community who want to assist other women to get basic information about AIDS. All party facilitators will receive two full days of training before they are listed in the party resource directory. Training will be held every two months.

Facilitators and hostesses will be paid $25 per party and childcare will be arranged. Party participants will also receive a take-home gift for attending.

If you are interested in hosting a Safety Net party at your home and/or training to become a party facilitator, call Rhoda Johnson at ABCD Health Services, 357-6000, ext. 295.

Civil Rights in Many Languages

The Massachusetts Attorney General's office recently published free brochures on civil rights in seven languages. The booklets give examples of discrimination and other civil rights violations and give the steps people should take if they feel their civil rights have been violated. They are printed in Cambodian, Chinese, Creole, Laotian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English. They can be obtained from the Department of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

The **All Write News** *is published every two months by the A.L.R.I. All signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and are not meant to reflect the views of the A.L.R.I. or its sponsoring institutions or funders. Send all material to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I.* **The deadline for the next issue is December 15.**

A Modest Proposal

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the "curve" referred to here is the Normal Curve, and that in any group of people (or other items, for that matter) distribution of anything naturally follows this curve. (We have all seen how the ball bearings are distributed along the normal curve in the exhibit in the Science Museum, I'm sure.) My point is that, "mastery learning" notwithstanding, students learning about anything, whether number facts, parts of speech, or critical thinking skills will in fact be distributed this way. So why not be truthful, and let the students know where they stand? Why not give the "A's" to the top one quarter, and the "D's" to the bottom quarter?

Finally, and I know this will win the hearts of all my fellow teachers, assigning letter grades four times a school year will save us from the mounds of paperwork we're buried under. Who cares if a student "terminates negatively," or if a student "transferred to another program" or "attained work maturity competencies." What I--and others who are honest about it--want to know is, did the student get a good grade or not?

I realize that not everyone will agree with my proposal, but I haven't heard anything yet that's one bit better. If you have a better idea, I'd like to hear it.

Reminder: The Adult Literacy Resource Institute, along with the 10 other programs that make up the RCC Center for Community and Workplace Education, will be hosting an **OPEN HOUSE** on Monday, Nov. 14, from 5-8 pm at our new location, 241 St. Botolph St. in Boston. There'll be food, live music, tours of the building, and more. We hope to see you there!

The Class Supported Me

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consciousness.

While Pam never actually left her family, she has left behind the blinders her family imposed upon her. She was able to see possiblities for actions, so that finally when Doug suggested it, she applied for a job at the nursing home he worked in. She got the job.

[The complete version of this article is available from the author at the A.L.R.I.]

A.L.R.I. Notes

Share This Newsletter (and Fliers)!

We would like to ask for your help as a recipient of the A.L.R.I. newsletter and publicity fliers: Please share these with others at your program. Much as we'd like to, there is no way we can put on our mailing list every staff person at every adult literacy/adult basic education program in the area. (We do, however, want to make sure that every program that's interested in our activities is represented on our mailing list by someone.)

Consequently, we rely on you, the people who **are** on the mailing list, to share the materials you receive with those who are not. Whether it's by posting things on bulletin boards or passing them from person to person or announcing things at staff meetings, we hope you can help to pass the word about our activities. Thanks very much!

When Visiting the A.L.R.I. ...

As predicted in our last newsletter, the A.L.R.I. has, in fact, moved and is now located at 241 St. Botolph St. in Boston (the former Cotting School), near the intersection of Massachusetts Ave. and Huntington Ave. We also have a new phone number--424-7947--but our mailing address remains the same (A.L.R.I., c/o Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120).

All in all, it's a good location for us. We are easily accessible on the "T" via either: 1) the Orange Line (Mass. Ave. stop); 2) the Brigham Circle (E) Line (Symphony stop); 3) the Arborway bus (Gainsborough St. stop); or 4) the Harvard/Dudley bus (Huntington Ave. stop). Also, we're a 10-minute walk from the Auditorium stop on the Green Line. And, in fact, if you're coming to the A.L.R.I. for whatever reason, we recommend that you take the "T" if it's at all possible, because parking in our area is very, very scarce. There is some metered parking on St. Botolph and nearby streets (Mass. Ave. and Huntington Ave., for instance), but competition for spaces is fierce; also the Prudential Center Garage is fairly close (a 10-minute walk), but rather expensive. So, in general, the "T" is best, if you can do it.

Staff Changes

Zahida Vides-Costa, who has been our Administrative Assistant, has left the A.L.R.I. to begin teaching ESL at one of Boston's community based education programs, Mujeres Unidas en Accion. We want to thank Zahida for all her work over the past year and we wish her luck in her new career.

Taking her place is Lillian Perez, who moves over to the A.L.R.I. from Roxbury Community College's Division of Extended Education. Welcome, Lillian!

Teaching About AIDS

The A.L.R.I. is in the process of collecting any curriculum materials used by teachers or counselors who have been teaching about AIDS. We are especially interested in materials which you or your students developed, in addition to finding out about any other printed or media materials which you have found helpful.

We are collecting these materials for a resource file on "Teaching About AIDS" which will be made available to anyone interested in resources for doing education about AIDS with adults. (This file will be part of a new "Teacher-Sharing Center" at the A.L.R.I. devoted to collecting teacher-developed materials.) AIDS activists inside and outside the classroom have complained about the lack of culturally-sensitive educational materials about AIDS and related issues, so any materials which you have found helpful with specific groups would be especially useful.

If you have materials you would like to contribute please contact Beth Sauerhaft at the A.L.R.I. (424-7947) and I'll send you a cover page, asking for a brief description of the materials and information so that anyone interested in them will have a way to get in touch with you. Perhaps you have worked on AIDS in your classroom, but you don't have your materials together? Call me anyway and perhaps you can contribute "one good idea" that worked in your class.

I'm hoping that this resource file will be organized by sometime in late January or early February. Right now we do have some things in the file which you're welcome to use if you're willing to sort through them--sort of like shopping at Filene's basement. If you are thinking about doing some work on AIDS at your program and would like to check out the file and/or get in touch with other program folks doing education about AIDS, give me a call and I'll be happy to arrange a time to talk with you . *--Beth Sauerhaft*

Mini-Courses & Colloquia: Who Do We Serve?

We are sometimes asked how many people

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A.L.R.I. Notes

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and programs we serve through our various activities. The following is intended to provide that information for one aspect of the A.L.R.I.'s services, namely, our mini-courses, workshops, and colloquia. During FY88 (that is, July, 1987-June, 1988) the A.L.R.I. offered 12 multi-session events (mini-courses) and 11 colloquia/workshops (one- or two-session events). Total attendance at all these events was approximately 600. After taking into account people who attended more than one event, we can say that approximately 400 different people representing 135 different programs (most of them in the Greater Boston area) attended one or more events at the A.L.R.I. These figures help indicate the extent of the need for the type of staff development services provided by the A.L.R.I.

"Need I Say More" Needs You

Need I Say More, the magazine of adult literacy student writings published by the A.L.R.I. and the Brookline Public Library, is seeking material for publication in its next issue. Anyone presently enrolled in an adult literacy program in the Boston/Brookline area is eligible to participate. All types of writing are considered for publication in the magazine, and we also need student art works. When submitting something, please include a few sentences about yourself; it helps our readers understand the writings or art works better if they know a few things about the person who wrote the piece or the artist who created the work. To submit something, please send it to the Editorial Committee of Need I Say More, at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. *--Kona Khasu*

First Weeks on the Job...

As the new ESL/Bilingual Resource Specialist at the A.L.R.I., I'm in the process of trying to find my way (literally and figuratively) around Boston and the adult ESL/literacy programs in the area. I've had a chance to meet with several programs and talk with staff, and as I begin my investigation into program, teacher, and student needs, my role as a resource specialist is starting to evolve. Plans for technical assistance are beginning to take shape for the course of the year. Certain topics, such as "teaching low level literacy," "using technology in teaching ESL," and "teaching the multi-level class" seem to emerge as interests across program lines, and may be addressed in the form of workshops or mini-courses.

Some program needs have been more immediate than others. For example, the "second stage" phase of the 1986 immigration law (IRCA) has caused concern among several programs. I've begun to collect and distribute information in this area, including specifics on the ESL/Civics component for newly legalized immigrants as well as information about the rights of the undocumented. Teachers are encouraged to contact me (or directly contact the excellent staff at MIRA, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition 357-6000, ext.448) for more information about how the law affects their students and communities. As the second stage ESL/Civics classes progress, I hope to provide a forum at the A.L.R.I. for ESL teachers to discuss curriculum and related issues.

In addition to planning workshops, I'm open to working with programs in other ways. For example, collaborative teaching, facilitating teacher observations and teacher sharing sessions within or between programs, helping to plan and carry out special projects (video, writing) are only a few possibilities.

My own perceptions of teaching ESL are informed by my teaching experiences, my background in English and composition theory, and my work as a poet. I'm committed to a pedagogy that includes a range of literacy practices from the functional to the critical, where adult learners take an active participatory role in the direction of their learning. My background includes teaching limited-literate refugees and immigrants in a community-based program, teaching "non-traditional" adults (both non-native and native speakers of English) on the pre-college and college level, and teaching in the People's Republic of China. My most recent experience was directing a union-based Workplace ESL Project through the Labor Education Center at Southeastern Massachusetts University. As a result of these experiences, I think I bring some understanding of both problems and possibilities in adult education.

I'd like to see a few things happen in the field of ESL. First, I'd like to see the distinction between "ESL" and "literacy" dissolved in favor of a more holistic, contextually-based, socially-grounded approach to language and literacy instruction. Next, I'd like to see the distinctions among

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A.L.R.I. Notes

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the kinds of adult learners (ESL, ABE, GED) examined more closely; I think we need to look at some comon assumptions about teaching adult learners rather than focusing on constraints that define and limit our approaches to teaching. I'm particularly interested in examining issues in ESL assessment and the relationship between assessment and teaching practices.

I'm hoping that ESL programs might think about the kinds of projects they'd like to do if they had more time and resources and then determine the ways in which the ESL Resource Specialist might help in carrying through with those plans. I've outlined some possibilities above, but I'm sure there are others. Teachers and program staff are welcome to call and set up individual meetings on-site or at the A.L.R.I.--to look at materials, to discuss ESL related issues, or to give me some good survival strategies (basic numeracy for the buses, color identification for the "T," following basic directions) for maneuvering my way around Boston.

--Lenore Balliro

Videos Available for Loan

The A.L.R.I. has two new video tapes available for loan. If you'd like to borrow either of the following videos, contact James McCullough at the A.L.R.I.

One is "First Things First," the PBS documentary shown recently on Ch. 2, which deals with the issue of family literacy and looks at programs across the country that are working to break the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy.

The other is "Workplays: You and Your Rights on the Job," produced by the Labor Education Center at Southeastern Mass. University. "Workplays" takes a problem-solving approach to workplace safety, health and rights issues, primarily for immigrant workers, and is suitable for intermediate ESL or ABE classes. Each of the 5 units (on safety & health, workers' compensation, discrimination, unions, and "other rights") presents factual information as well as 2-3 mini-dramas for student interpretation. "Workplays" is also available for purchase for $65 from the Labor Ed. Center (contact Erica Bronstein, LEC, SMU, North Dartmouth, MA 02747).

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

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Boston, MA 02120-3400

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

ALL WRITE NEWS

January/February 1989 Volume V Number 4

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Located at: 241 St. Botolph Street, Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 424-7947

Teachers Visiting Teachers: An Experiment in Classroom Observation

by Lenore Balliro, A.L.R.I.

For a week in November, my work as the ESL Resource Specialist at the A.L.R.I. took me to the Cardinal Cushing Center as part of a teacher observation, cross-visitation project. Throughout the week, I substitute-taught ESL classes while teachers were released to observe the teaching of their colleagues. At the end of the week we met as a group to discuss the experiment. The following is a description of the event with some reflection about implications for other programs.

The Idea

The idea for cross-visitations at the Cardinal Cushing Center emerged from an initial meeting I had with the staff earlier in the term. This meeting, one of the many I scheduled with programs when I first came on board as part of the A.L.R.I. staff, was held to discuss teachers' interests and needs for the coming year. Underlying the requests for materials and various kinds of information relating to ESL was the pervasive need that adult educators often express to do more "teacher sharing" among themselves, to share resources and to explore teaching and learning with each other on a regular basis. One teacher in the program noted that, while she attended workshops on ESL methodology from time to time, she had never actually seen her own colleagues teach.

After reflecting on the expressed needs of the teachers, I proposed a project, limited in scope, where I could facilitate cross-visitations among teachers. From my point of view, the experiment would serve at least two purposes: First, teachers could share direct

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The Boston Adult Literacy Fund: Raising Funds, Raising Hopes

by Silja Kallenbach

As the funding picture for adult literacy education in Massachusetts has turned from bleary to dreadful this year, the establishment of the Boston Adult Literacy Fund brings some hope to Boston's community-based adult literacy programs. The Fund does not intend or hope to supplant public support for adult literacy, but will use private funds to supplement it in meaningful ways. Our first year's goal is to raise one million dollars to support the work of community-based adult literacy programs in Boston through both direct grants and our literacy endowment. The literacy endowment, which will be managed by the Boston Foundation, will generate a small but constant amount of support through the interest it earns.

Much of the Fund's support, at least initially, will go toward strenthening the current network of programs, rather than toward expansion. the need to upgrade various aspects of program operations, such as teacher salaries and benefits, emerged as the top priority in a needs assessment I conducted for the Fund this past summer, covering 35 Boston adult literacy programs.

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Remember: Please share this newsletter with others at your program. Thank you!

Teachers Visiting Teachers

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experience of their classroom practice with each other and reflect upon the assumptions that guide their practice. Second, I could move toward my own goal of providing more varied kinds of assistance to Boston programs. In addition to the more traditional workshops and consulting, I could begin to facilitate a more process-oriented, teacher-based approach to staff development. The expertise of teachers could be shared among themselves; I would be there to help set it in motion.

Generating Questions

About a week before the observations took place, we met to define what we might be doing and how we'd be doing it. In organizing this part of the process, I was informed by a number of sources: Dixie Goswami's **Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Social Change**, Frederick Erickson's monograph **Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching** and notes from Susan Lytle and Marilyn Cochran-Smith on Teacher Research, delivered at the Fall, 1988, Boston University conference on Language and Literacy.

First, we asked: Do we all want to participate in the observations, and if so, why? No one was required to take part, and not everyone did. Also, teachers chose who they wanted to observe based on their own reasons. Second, we asked: What do we want to find out by observing each other? To frame the observations, teachers generated some questions they had about teaching practice. Two sets of questions emerged: questions the observer posed (what the observer wanted to find out by visiting another classroom) and questions the teacher being observed posed (what the observed teacher wanted to find out about his or her own teaching).

We decided that each teacher would make a short list of questions he or she would like the observer to watch for in the classroom. During the week, the teacher could engage in some self-reflection based on these questions as another way to share insights about the observations. We also recognized that while the questions would provide some structure for the observations, we didn't want to be limited by them; rather, we recognized that unexpected observations might prove the most interesting. The actual process, as it turned out, was not all linear; the two sets of questions merged at times, and the unexpected led to interesting and revealing discussions.

Some of the questions teachers raised reflected concerns far greater in scope than "What can I do that's fun and new on Monday morning?" Some of these questions included:

--How is the first language used in the class? When does the teacher go back to English after using the first language?

--When do teachers transition from oral discussion to literacy? How much literacy work is being done, and how?

--How much does the teacher set the agenda for the class, and how much do students?

The questions themselves, born out of particular experiences teachers had in the classroom, raised possibilities for further exploration beyond our week-long experiment.

We briefly discussed methods for observation and decided that we would do the following: 1) inform students about what was going on beforehand; and 2) take notes based on questions and other things that seemed noteworthy, so we'd have specifics to share during feedback. We also clearly established that the purpose of doing the observations was for exploration, not evaluation.

Observing

On the first day of the week we set aside to conduct cross-visitations, I spent the morning observing each of the teachers for whom I'd be substituting. The purpose for this was to provide a context for the lessons I'd be doing in those classes. At the end of the day, teachers met with me to provide guidelines for the classes. They allowed, and in some cases encouraged me to experiment with and adapt their ideas or even to discard them if the situation in class suggested that. The collaboration that took place at this level--between two teachers (and sometimes more, if another teacher dropped in and joined the discussion) talking about how to follow through with an idea for a lesson, each drawing from different yet overlapping strategies, resources, experiences--provided a rich exchange I hadn't anticipated as part of my substituting role.

On the second day, teachers began visiting each other's classes. Certainly, a great deal of teacher sharing, both formal and informal, took place throughout the week related to the observations. For example, teachers who were paired for cross-visitations met with each other after observations to share insights

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Teachers Visiting Teachers

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based on the guiding questions and other interesting specifics. But there was also a kind of rippling effect among the staff as a whole. Before, in between, and after classes, teachers were sharing their experiences with each other, not just between pairs. They shared materials (Where'd you get that book you were using today? Can I borrow it?) They shared concerns (How did your follow-up lesson go to yesterday's class?) They shared frustrations (Today didn't go as well as yesterday.) They also shared strategies and experiences and solutions. While it's true that some of the dialogue can be attributed to the normal discussions teachers in any agency share with each other (that is, talk about their work), what seemed different here was that teachers had a specific context for their discussions, a context that prompted questions, illustrated ideas, provided points of departure for further dialogue. Too, teachers lingered after classes were over to follow through with some of the discussions that were initiated during the day.

Outcomes

There were at least two kinds of outcomes as a result of our week: for teachers and for me as a resource person. We met as a group on the Friday of that week to reflect on what happened and to suggest possible follow-ups.

First, teachers seemed to be in agreement that the experiment indeed had value even though it was so short term. "It's good to have someone draw you out about what you do," one teacher noted. Another teacher reflected on the issue of trust. Because she was observing a trusted colleague, she was more open to a teaching style different from her own. She admitted that she was less judgmental and more willing to ask questions about the choices her colleague had made.

For example, in the class she observed, her colleague was recording the student's language on newsprint lying flat on the table rather than hanging up on the blackboard or wall. The teacher's first reaction was "Aren't you supposed to put it up on the wall for the students to read?" But instead of dismissing the alternative approach as wrong, she asked the teacher about her choice. The teacher responded, "When you raised that question "why," I really had to stop and think about it. If you hadn't raised that question, I wouldn't have been aware of that particular thing about my teaching. From this unexpected observation, an interesting discussion resulted about the connection between literacy and orality--one of the guiding questions raised in the initial meeting. Further, the same teacher mentioned that the experience had value for her because she was able to see in action the methods, ideas, materials, and approaches that she had only heard her colleagues talk about.

Some of the outcomes related specifically to methodology. For example, within the context of the newsprint discussion, the language experience approach to literacy was discussed, and variations shared. Another teacher was excited because she observed a different way of teaching pronunciation--an area she never felt very motivated to spend much time on. The next day she tried the strategy (having students correct each other's pronunciation) in her class and reported success.

The sharing that happened that week was not limited, however, to the exchange of techniques. Discussion about observations led to questions, questions led to clarification of assumptions, philosophies and ideologies were explored.

Also, sometime between the initial meeting and the carrying-out of this project, the ESL staff decided to devote a portion of their staff meetings to teacher sharing. This became another way that teachers could devote time to issues of pedagogy.

Teachers did feel, though, that there had been limitations to the project. They agreed that it would have been helpful to discuss beforehand what they'd be observing. Without a larger context (what came before, what would come after) it was sometimes difficult to get a sense of how that specific lesson fit into a longer sequence of instruction. They also suggested that it might be helpful to continue the process every month or so on a more limited basis (for example, one cross-visitation between two teachers).

Outcomes for the ESL Resource Person

The week had outcomes for me as well. It got me back into the classroom, so I could re-experience some of the "messiness" of the teaching process as opposed to the "set-up" of doing workshops. I also got to try out a few new ideas and materials I generated and then make them available as resources for other teachers. I was able to get a clearer sense of some of the resource needs the program and teachers had. Just by being there, I could provide more specific follow-up references

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Teachers Visiting Teachers

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and resources as a result of observations, discussions, and requests.

But in addition to providing resources, I felt that I collected many myself: teachers shared their approaches, suggestions, and experiences with me, which allowed me to add to my own repertoire and, in turn, to share more effectively with other practitioners. Further, I was able to note similarities among programs and point them out. For example, one of the teachers in an upper level class had been teaching a series of classes based on an article by Mike Barnicle of the Boston **Globe**. A recent project at Mujeres Unidas also focused on an article by Barnicle. Both classes resulted in writing letters to him and to the editor and trying to contact Barnicle in some way. There seemed to be an interesting follow-up possibility if teachers or students from these two programs decided to work together on a similar project.

The Bigger Picture

Cross-visitations and teacher observations are not a new idea in teacher education. Teacher-based classroom research (also called action research, qualitative research, naturalistic research) is gaining in popularity among educators. However, in adult education, especially in community-based programs, there are so many constraints working against teachers that it's often hard enough just to meet the expectations of teaching their own classes. Rarely are teachers encouraged, or allowed, to step back from their practice and talk with other practitioners about what they do. Staff meetings are common, but are usually consumed by "nuts and bolts" or "housekeeping" issues --issus that are not insignificant but which often impede discussion about teaching and learning.

However, because the field of adult literacy and language acquisition is evolving, teachers can provide a tremendous contribution to the field and should be encouraged to do so. Many of the questions that adult educators are posing (in addition to the ones mentioned earlier)--questions about the nature of learning disabilities, about adults who simply don't seem to progress, about the nature of literacy and THE BEST WAY TO TEACH IT --are ones that can frame further investigation, often by teachers themselves.

Implications

Teacher observations are one way that teachers' experiences and reflection upon those experiences are validated. They help to combat teacher alienation and increase morale among staff. They can encourage the exchange of effective teaching approaches which may lead to transformation of teaching practices. They may be modified in scope to meet the interests and needs of various programs. Variations on the model described here are endless. Teachers can visit other programs for visitations, students can visit each other's classes, collaborative teaching models could be explored. In the case of the Cardinal Cushing experiment, it didn't cost anything to conduct the project. There were no additional burdens placed on teachers or the program. Teacher observations took place during normal work hours, with pay. There was no need to pay for a substitute teacher, since I received my A.L.R.I. salary for my participation.

In this modest project, the nature of "technical assistance" took on a slightly different perspective. It's one that the A.L.R.I. and its resource staff have been working toward; it's an extension of the teacher-sharing workshops and the teacher-sharing file.[See "A.L.R.I. Notes" in this issue.] It rests on some assumptions that teachers have a lot to say about what they do and that they want to do it better.

Other ESL or adult literacy programs might be interested in experimenting with teacher observations or some variation on them. If the A.L.R.I. staff can assist such a project, let us know.

The **All Write News** *is published every two months by the A.L.R.I. All signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and are not meant to reflect the views of the A.L.R.I. or its sponsoring institutions or funders. Send all material to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I.* **The deadline for the next issue is February 15.**

Department of Anthropomorphism

Any organization likes to think that it's perceived, not as some faceless bureaucracy, but as a group of people, as human beings, and the A.L.R.I. is no exception. However, we felt that the Zenith Company's computers were taking this to something of an extreme recently when we received from them a letter addressed to "Mr. Adult L. Resource." (And why "Mr."? Maybe A.L. Resource is a "Ms.")

Boston Adult Literacy Fund

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At the same time, there are communities in Boston where there are no adult literacy programs, such as Mattapan, North Dorchester and Hyde Park. Our work is cut out for us, for the needs appear pressing everywhere we look!

Our grants are not likely to be in the same league as the Boston JCS Adult Literacy Initiative grants, but they will not be inconsequential either. We will have more leeway to fund experimental approaches and projects. We are also interested in exploring and forging more connections between adult literacy education and other areas, such as the arts. The possibilities are exciting.

As the Fund continues to develop, there are many roles we could play: a **catalyst** to develop new projects; a **broker** to bring together interested programs and prospective funders; a **coordinator** of collaborative proposals and citywide fundraising efforts; a **clearinghouse** for funding information; and a **source of technical assistance** on fundraising, proposal writing and program management. These roles will develop gradually as the needs arise and will be secondary to meeting our fundraising goal.

The Fund's mission and goals are ambitious and represent a first-of-a-kind effort in New England. Nationally, the Fund is among a handful of pioneers and, I suspect, unique when it comes to structure and community involvement.

Although the Fund's Board of Directors is predominantly corporate, an integral part of the Fund's structure is our newly formed Community Advisory Council. Its role is to advise the Fund on what should be our funding priorities, based on a citywide analysis of the needs and informed by what we know about good practice. I will be working closely with the Council to assist the members in developing grant programs, application guidelines, and mechanisms to maintain a dialog with the community at large. The council will take considerable responsibility for shaping the Fund. It was formed to break away from the common pattern which leaves out the true experts, the teachers, students, and program directors, from the real decision-making.

The Council members were selected through a comprehensive application and interview process and are representative of the very diverse programs and people involved in Boston's community-based adult literacy network--staff and students. I am very confident about their integrity and ability to transcend narrow, program-specific self-interests. During proposal reading time, the members will abstain from reviewing requests from the program they represent. Having worn grant-maker's shoes for some time now, I am convinced that entirely neutral grant-making is as much a myth as neutral education.

Our monthly meetings and concurrent trainings will, no doubt, be a forum for discussing and probably debating some very interesting and thorny issues: What defines **community-based** adult literacy programs? Are volunteer tutoring and vocational ABE programs within the Fund's scope of support? What needs are the most pressing among the many we know of? What do we mean by successful or effective practice and how can a funder ascertain that ? And so on.

If you, the reader, have views on these or other relevant issues and would like to bring them to the Fund's attention, you should not hesitate to contact me (266-1891) or any of the following Council members who are your representatives:

Henry Allen, Dean of Extended Education, Roxbury Community College

Teresa Bond, ABE Student, Jamaica Plain Community Schools Adult Learning Program

Sarah Boyer, ABE Teacher, United South End Settlements

Judy Brewer, ESL Program Director, Quincy School Community Council

Deborah Cassidy, Education and Training Program Manager, Boston Housing Authority Community Services Unit

Marcia Chaffee, Refugee ESL Coordinator, International Institute of Boston

Rosario Gomez-Sanford, ESL Teacher, Cardinal Cushing Center

Henry Joseph, ESL Teacher, Haitian Multi-Service Center

Vicky Nunez, ABE Teacher, Jamaica Plain Community Schools Adult Learning Program

Jeremie Robert, ESL Student, Haitian Multi-Service Center

Zahida Vides, ESL Teacher, Mujeres Unidas en Accion

Cindy Walker, former literacy student and tutor now studying at Suffolk University to become an adult literacy teacher

Mattie Wheeler, ABE Student, Jamaica Plain Community Schools Adult Learning Program

* * * * * * * * *

Silja Kallenbach is Associate Director of the Boston Adult Literacy Fund.

New Adult Literacy Materials Now At the Boston Public Library

by Ellen Graf

If, in the past, you have gone to the Boston Public Library looking for literacy and ESL materials and been disappointed with the small collection, please try again. The Central Library in Copley Square now has a much expanded "Literacy Resource Center" as a result of a $25,000 LSCA grant from the U.S. Department of Education, funds from the Commonwealth Literacy Campaign, and an endowment from the Boston **Globe** Foundation. It is located on the first floor of the library, opposite the main information desk. To get there, enter the new building at Boylston St. and walk straight back through the turnstiles and the main hall of the library almost to the windows. The Literacy Resource Center is on your right bounded on one side by four revolving paperback racks.

The collection contains various types of books and cassettes that we hope will be useful to adult literacy and ESL students, teachers and tutors. In most cases we purchased multiple copies of titles so that teachers could find enough copies for a small class of 5 to 10 students.

What kinds of books will you find there? Easy-to-read mysteries, romances, and science fiction filled with action and suspense and hard to put down; classic stories such as **A Tale of Two Cities** and Shakespeare's plays simplified and in comic book format; a series of famous short stories by authors such as Edgar Allen Poe with accompanying tapes that follow the simplfied text word for word.

Many of the books we purchased were recommended to us by people working in literacy programs throughout Boston. Also, in their workshop, "Oh, Let It Shine: Teaching Literacy Through Literature," given last year at the A.L.R.I., Barbara Neumann and James McCullough recommended many books for teachers to use with their students. If you missed the workshop, the Literacy Center has the folder of materials handed out at the workshop as well as multiple copies of the books recommended , written by authors such as Alice Walker, June Jordan, Gloria Naylor, Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, etc.

The Center contains several copies of a lovely biography of Billie Holiday written in the form of a blues song and very simple biographies of Langston Hughes and May Sarton as well as copies of the **Autobiography of Malcolm X.** There are copies of the autobiographical writings of students collected in anthologies published locally, such as **Need I Say More, Mosaic, Writings from the Jefferson Park Writing Center, The Mango Tree,** and **It's Never Easy**, to name just a few.

You will also find many copies of workbooks that teach basic skills, including phonics, reading comprehension, writing, spelling, grammar and preparing for the GED test. Other workbooks cover practical skills such as how to become a U.S. citizen (a bilingual English/Spanish edition is available), how to obtain a driver's license, finding a job, etc. One of the best of these workbooks (of which we have 20 copies) is **ESL For Action: Problem-Posing at Work** by UMass/Boston professor Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein, whose book **Language and Culture in Conflict** is also in the collection.

A group of books labeled "Teacher Resources" includes background reading on literacy by recognized leaders in the field such as Paulo Freire and David Harman, as well as books on teaching methods and activities by teachers such as Peter Elbow, Mina Shaughnessy , and many others.

Along with the books there is a small collection of audio tapes, many of which accompany the instructional workbooks, especially those designed for ESL students. There are about 30 series (4 tapes/series) of "Learn to Speak English" tapes for Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Spanish students. There are tapes of authors such as Maya Angelou and James Baldwin reading from their own works and several copies of **The People Could Fly**, which contains 12 stories from that book of American Black folktales. Most of the tapes are not yet available because of questions about packaging and circulation policies, but hopefully a system for borrowing cassette/book packages will be in place by January.

All the books in the LRC can be borrowed except for those in the section marked "Examination Collection." These books are only for use in the library and are located in the row of shelves directly opposite the revolving paperback racks. The books that do not circulate all have a "Ref." label on them, indicating they are reference books that cannot leave the library. The examination collection contains one copy of all books in the Literacy Resource Center.

All other materials in the LRC can be bor-

continued on next page

For Your Information

Hearings on New State Adult Ed. Plan

The Extended Committee on Adult Education of the State Board of Education will sponsor hearings to take comments on the Department of Education's proposed new four-year plan for adult education in Massachusetts. Hearings will be held from noon until 4:00 on Jan. 17th in Doric Hall at the State House in Boston and on Jan. 19th in Building 17, Room 102, at Springfield Technical Community College, 1 Amory Square, Springfield.

The proposed plan will be mailed out in early January and will also be available from the Department of Education's Bureau of Adult Services (770-7581) and from D.O.E. regional offices. Those wishing to attend the hearings will be able to comment on what is (and what is not, but should be) in the plan. Written testimony is welcome from those attending as well as from those who are unable to attend. For information on submitting written testimony in advance, call the Bureau of Adult Services.

ESL Volunteers Needed at Detention Center

Volunteer teachers and tutors are needed to work with about 50 men being held at the Coast Guard Detention Center in Boston because the government is challenging their legal status in this country. (Most will be seeking political asylum.) They represent a variety of countries, languages, English proficiency and literacy levels. Classes are held at the Detention Center in the North End on Mondays through Fridays from 10:00 to 11:30am. Tutoring is possible during visiting hours, which are 1-3 and 6-8pm, also Mon.-Fri. To volunteer, or for more information, contact Rev. Constance Hammond at the Old North Church, 720-5052.

Career Counseling for Women

My Sister's Place Homeless Advocacy Center has opened a new Career Counseling Program for women. This program will offer help in the areas of career assessment, job exploration, job search skills, work issues counseling, and job listings. The program is located at 62 Berkeley St., Boston. For more information, call 542-8413. (My Sister's Place is a project of the American Friends Service Committee and is offering this program in collaboration with Horizons House/Women's Educational and Industrial Union.)

Adult Skills Training Programs

Roxbury Community College and Madison Park/Humphrey Center High School are co-sponsoring FREE skills training programs for adults in three areas: Printing; Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning; and Oil Burner Technology. The purpose of these programs is to prepare participants for enty-level positions in these areas and to allow some to upgrade their present skills. Participants can also receive assistance in basic skills and in vocational assessment. The programs last 15 weeks and meet two evenings per week, 6-9pm. The next cycle begins March 1; registration will be Feb. 27 and 28, 6-9pm at the Humphrey Center, lower cafeteria. For more info., call Charlie Cafferty at 442-5200.

Literacy Art Competition

UNESCO/USA is running a nationwide competition for designs of bookplates illustrating the joys of reading and the rewards of literacy. Adult students compete in their own division. For more info., write UNESCO/USA, 5815 Lawton Ave., Oakland, CA 94618-1510.

New BPL Materials

continued from previous page

rowed by anyone who has a library card. The normal borrowing period for library materials is three weeks; however, special arrangements can be made by students and teachers for longer loans of up to three months. To arrange an extended loan, just ask the librarian on duty for a deposit loan.

Eighteen of the 25 branch libraries in the BPL system have smaller literacy collections drawn from the books in the central library's collection. You may borrow materials at any branch as well as at the central library.

I've been asked about writing in the workbooks. I suggest either writing in pencil and then erasing your answers when you are finished with the book or writing answers on a separate sheet of paper.

As the literacy collections at the BPL are new, we would appreciate your comments and suggestions as well as your book recommendations. Please put them in the suggestion box in the Literacy Resource Center in the central library. For more information or to schedule a class tour of the central library, call me at 536-5400, x336. (To arrange a tour of a branch library, call them directly.)

* * * * * * * * * *

Ellen Graf is Special Projects Librarian at the Boston Public Library.

A.L.R.I. Notes

Staff Changes

The A.L.R.I. would like to welcome Helen Jones to our staff in her new capacity as ABE Specialist. Helen has already been working with us as Coordinator of the "License to Literacy" special project that's rewriting, and developing curriculum for, the state's driver's license manual. Before that she was an ABE teacher at the Jackson/Mann Community School in Allston. Now, starting this month, she'll be wearing her new ABE hat here at the A.L.R.I., while also continuing to devote some of her time to helping the "License to Literacy" project wind down to completion. We're happy that Helen will be staying with us.

The New A.L.R.I. Teacher-Sharing File

The A.L.R.I. is in the process of setting up a new "Teacher Sharing File" which we hope will be of use as an additional resource for teachers. The purpose of the file is so teachers can avoid reinventing the proverbial wheel and can benefit from the experiences of other teachers.

Anyone can come in to look at the materials gathered in the "File," and we strongly encourage teachers also to contribute to this collection. The more material we receive from teachers, the more useful the File will be. Anything which you'd like to share with other teachers--materials you've developed, teaching ideas or lesson plans you've used, published materials you've found helpful, or anything else--all of these are things we'd be glad to get for the file. We have, for example, received from teachers a number of ideas for working with multi-level (or in other ways diverse) groups of students.

The Teacher Sharing File is located in room 203 (look for the big orange shelves) and is accessible during our regular hours. If you have any questions about this, or if you'd like to contribute something to the File, please contact any of the A.L.R.I.'s TA Group members--Greg, Lenore, Helen, Beth, or Steve.

Upcoming Mini-Courses and Colloquia

For the second half of this year (February through June), mini-courses are being planned that deal with: Student Assessment (starting in Feb.); Program Administration (starting in Feb. or March); and Exploring Our City's Multicultural Diversity (probably starting in April). (There may also be one or two other mini-courses that have not yet been determined.)

Also, A.L.R.I. colloquia during these months will probably focus on: Teaching Writing, Using Media and Other Technology in Adult Ed., Linking ABE and Job Skills Training Programs, The New GED, and possibly other areas.

Job Exchange

Job Seekers: As always, this list may not be completely current by the time you receive it. We strongly encourage you to come in to the A.L.R.I. and look at our Job Openings book for more current information. You may also want to leave a copy of your resume with us for our Job Seekers File used by programs with job openings and/or sign up and leave your resume in our Substitute Teacher Bank.

The **East Boston Harborside Community School** may still be looking for: 1) a full-time **Head Teacher** and 2) a part-time **Teacher** for their ESL/Civics program--bilingual (Spanish/English), BA/BS, relevant training and 1 yr. ESL experience required. Also 3) a part-time **ABE Teacher** --16 hrs/wk, evenings, $10/hr. Call Kathleen O'Connell at 567-6800.

El Centro del Cardenal may still need: 1) a full-time **Teacher/Coordinator** and 2) a full-time **Teacher/Counselor** for their ESL/Civics for Immigrants program--experience in adult ESL, in curriculum development, and working in the Latino community, also bilingual/bicultural (English/Spanish) required; salary $20,000 and $18,000 respectively. Also, 3) a full-time **ESL/Communications/Math Teacher** and 4) a part-time **English Pre-GED Teacher** for their bilingual alternative education program for Boston's out-of-school Latino youth. Call Elizabeth Zweig at 542-9292.

The **Boston Adult Literacy Fund** may still be seeking an **Executive Director** --5 yrs. experience in non-profit management, documented fund-raising success, ability to work with corporate Board required, experience in adult or community education preferred. Salary mid-30's. Resume to : BALF, 241 St. Botolph Street, Boston, MA 02115.

The **International Institute of Boston** may still be seeking: 1) a full-time **Director of Educational Services** --5 yrs. adult ed. experi-

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Letters to the Editor

Re: Paid Assistant Teacher Positions

There is a need for more paid assistant teacher positions in adult education. Many enthusiastic, talented individuals would like to teach ABE, ESL, and GED classes. If these individuals have no teaching experience, they have the choice of either going in cold--thus hurting the students--or accepting a volunteer assistant teacher position--thus hurting their pocketbooks and taking time away from other obligations. There must be a better way.

I was lucky to find a paid assistant teacher position in workplace education at Roxbury Community College. I am training to become a head teacher; I prepare my lessons and I learn from the specialists at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. My salary does not pay all my bills, yet it is close enough that I can afford to give my teaching my full attention.

The students benefit from having both a head teacher and an assistant teacher. Two instructors can share ideas and approaches to make a better course. The teachers can share responsibility for the curriculum. For example, one can develop math materials and the other can create English lessons. Finally, one-on-one tutoring is a must for many students and with two instructors the students receive twice as much individual attention. For the sake of the students and teacher in training, more paid assistant teacher positions should be created.

Tom Golden
Assistant Teacher (in charge of math)
Career Enhancement Training Program
Roxbury Community College

Re: Reply to Yvonne O'Moore Patience

Dear Yvonne: (May I call you Yvonne? I feel I know you!) Thank you for your forthright look at evaluation in your "Modest Proposal" in the last issue of this newsletter. You've cogently argued for a solution that allows us to stop all this talk about assessment and to get on with our real work! I give it my approbation and sincerely hope that adult educators do the same. In fact, I think that such a plan should be required by the state. I agree wholeheartedly that the grading system allows us to build on a proven, effective approach used for years in the public schools--a venerable institution that provides optimum opportunities for each and every one of our American citizens. Yvonne (and Gentle Readers), let us face it: students either make the grade or they don't. Faced with the possibility of a C or D, our "lesser motivated" or developmentally impaired students might drop out altogether. Good! Then we could better teach the truly worthy and report our glowing successes to our funders. We could boast a large number of positive terminators with A's and B's, receive our refunding for next year, and keep our jobs. There should be "special classes" for those C and D students, anyway. But Yvonne, I think we **should** give E or F grades. It is our duty as teachers to call a failure a failure. Let us not inflate those poor unfortunates with a false sense of optimism about their possibility of learning beyond their limited potential. One final note. Let's start punishing our students if they do not achieve the potential God gave them. This would surely motivate them to get the A's and B's we like to see.

Most sincerely,
(Miss) Y. A. Hoó

Job Exchange

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ence (including administrative and preferably in ESL) required; $22-25,000; and 2) part-time **ESL and ESL/Civics Teachers** for morning and evening classes. Call Katherine Petrullo at 536-1081.

The **Continuing Education Institute** may still need 1) a full-time **Federal Grant Administrator/ABE Consultant** ; 2) a full-time **ESL Consultant/Site Manager**; and 3) part-time **Science, Math, and ESL Teachers** to teach at company and community locations, afternoons and evenings. Call 449-4802.

The Boston **Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services** is seeking : 1) a full-time **Program Administrator** for the Neighborhood Jobs Trust, $27-30,000; and 2) a full-time **Planner** for its Adult Skills Training Program--excellent writing skills, familiarity with relevant grant programs, knowledge of statistics required, $21-24,000. Boston residency required for both. Resume and letter to: Ann Woodward, JCS, 43 Hawkins St., Boston, MA 02114.

The Roxbury Community College **Boston Workplace Education Collaborative** is seeking: 1) a full-time **Program Coordinator** ; and 2) 3 part-time **ESL Instructors** (11 hrs./wk) to provide ESL/Civics classes to workers in 3 local unions through June. Send letter and resume to: BWEC, 241 St. Botolph St., Boston, MA 02115 or call 266-6133.

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compiled by James McCullough, A.L.R.I.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For Teachers and Students:

Seven Alternatives in Responding to Readings

Many teachers and students have recently expressed interest in how to hold discussions with diverse groups where students are at different levels, are of different genders, are culturally diverse, etc. Teachers especially have expressed concern that some students' needs get met less than others, some students speak less than others, some dominate, some are not supportive.

Here are seven techniques teachers have told me about that are alternatives to the traditional choices of individual work or whole group discussions. Here's what teachers have told their classes:

1) "Come to class tomorrow with what you felt were the most important questions raised by this book." When the class met the next day, they listed all of the questions. Then the teacher had the class break into groups of 4 to choose the most important questions.

2) "Write all the main ideas (from the article you read) on scraps of paper and group them. Then in pairs discuss why you organized them that way." (One can later ask, "What did you learn by comparing your answers with others?")

3) "In groups of 2, make a time-line, sketching the plot."

4) "What do you think xyz symbolizes? Find two people who agree with you."

5) "Which of the two main characters (or points of view) do you like better?" The class broke into those who liked one and those who liked the other and the teacher said, "You'll have 5 minutes to defend your choice."

6) After discussion of a subject, the teacher would ask the class to outline how the discussion went. Another teacher said, "Summarize the discussion; turn to the person next to you and summarize what we've just said."

7) Some other ideas I've tried: panel discussions, debates, fishbowls, dramatizations, one student interviews the teacher....

What's important in these techniques is that they provide **everyone** an opportunity to share their thoughts with others and that **students** are asking questions, not just the teacher.

Please let me know if these ideas work for your class or call me if you want to know how they were specifically applied. These, like all teaching methods, are to be experimented with and adapted.

--Greg Leeds, A.L.R.I.

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

c/o Roxbury Community College
1234 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02120-3400

We're sorry this newsletter is late. It was originally mailed in mid-January, but that mailing, for unknown reasons, never reached our readers. So we've re-printed and re-mailed this newsletter and the enclosed fliers.

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

ALL WRITE NEWS

March/April 1989 Volume V Number 5

A Joint Program of Roxbury Community College & the University of Massachusetts at Boston
Located at: 241 St. Botolph Street, Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 424-7947

Singing the Red Pen Blues: Ideas for Teaching Writing

by Gail Hart and Janet Stein

[The following two pieces were originally written, the first by Gail Hart and the second by Janet Stein, while participating in the A.L.R.I. mini-course "The Red Pen Blues: Teaching Reading and Writing to Adults," presented by Greg Leeds this past October-November. They are reprinted from the collection of writings which the course produced. At that time Gail Hart was teaching at the Aswalos House/WEAVE Program in Roxbury, while Janet Stein was working in Roxbury Community College's Division of Extended Education.--Ed.]

I woke up that Tuesday morning with no lesson plan. I decided to rely on "inspiration" to show me the way.

The night before I was listening to one of my favorite cassettes, which has a variety of musical styles on it, including Billie Holiday, Bob Marley, and Run-DMC. The only thing I was inspired to do was to listen to music, so I took my tape and box to school. It was time to do one of those "sensory" exercises. I started choosing my words on the #44 bus: "Just listen to the music and write down whatever comes to mind..."

Standing in front of the class, I continued the monologue. "Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Just listen to it first. I'll play it again." I selected "El Chuntunquero" by the Peruvian group Fortaleza. I presumed that few in the class would have heard Andean music before. To help, I wrote some guide questions on the board: 1) How does the music make you feel? 2) Which instruments do you hear? 3) Where is the music from?

The piece begins with the sound of birds chirping. The primary instruments used are

continued on page 2

For ABE Teachers and Students: Tests That Don't Defeat

by Greg Leeds, A.L.R.I.

[The following is the first in a 2-part series focusing on criticisms of and alternatives to standardized tests. This first article looks at concerns surrounding the tests and aims to provide literacy professionals with seven options for assessing student progress. The second article will look at nine teacher-generated ideas on evaluating course content, student learning styles and teacher improvement.]

I hear over and over that the TABE and ABLE tests are not effective. Students hear, "The test doesn't mean anything, but we have to do it. Don't worry about your score." And teachers keep complaining, "What I teach isn't on the test."

For me the standardized tests are ineffective for numerous reasons. They provide teachers with little information. They do not show how students think, what students need or what kinds of errors they make. The tests do not recognize many strengths students have; they only recognize a limited scope of students' literacy.

Tests like the TABE and ABLE do not help students understand their own learning process nor do they directly help students learn. They do not look at the types of

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Remember: Please share this newsletter with others at your program. Thank you!

Ideas for Teaching Writing

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pan flutes and strings, and light but steady percussion. No singing.

The students were really into it. They listened closely at first, then began scribbling away, as I played it over. I was pleased to see doodles, sketches and other marginalia, which indicated to me that their minds were relaxed and free. Karon admitted having a writer's block, and saying it out loud helped her to overcome it. The other students helped by asking her questions and chatting about their own impressions. Really, this class was like a TV version of an ABE class: Creative! Involved! Conscientious!

After about the seventh playing, folks started to compare notes. Yes, they were talking about the assignment, not something else, as tends to happen about 20 minutes into a writing exercise. The music assisted them to focus on the work.

Finally, I asked people to share what they had written. It was like opening a box of assorted chocolates! Such diverse and creative pieces came out of that 30-40 minute exercise. Ada wrote a dream sequence called "China Dance," in which she imagined herself floating on a cloud, surrounded by lily-clad Chinese dancers. She read it with such soul. Elaine's was just as whimsical, although more earthly. She said the music made her feel like putting on her yellow dress and yellow shoes and eating popcorn. She even drew a box of popcorn and balloons in her margin. Tanya said the music sounded like a movie soundtrack. She envisioned a Mexican man riding through the desert on horseback, in search of an adventure. Janice wrote a haunting short story about a Japanese woman awaiting her husband's return from battle, and decorating their home with fresh flowers.

I was blown away. The students were so talented that it was almost intimidating. That exercise demonstrated how high their standards were. Accordingly, I had to raise my own standards.

As each person revealed their impressions, I recorded key words on the board, including their guesses as to which nation the music came from. Africa, China, and Mexico were the main ones. I told them the music was Peruvian and asked someone to find Peru on the map. That map always seems to work its way into our lessons.

The students were impressed with each other. I think they were really proud of each other and recognized individual talent.

The exercise illustrated a few things that I had been trying to explain in previous classes. One was the value of pre-writing, going with one's initial impression and worrying about mechanics later. The music made it easier. The other was the power of description. Lastly, the exercise reminded us all that there are always an infinite number of ways to look at the same thing (or listen to the same song).

The next class was used for editing, spelling checks and the like. In the meantime, Janice created a gorgeous multi-colored paper mosaic of a woman in a kimono. It was truly beautiful. I was pleased that the exercise released this other impulse in her.

Not every unplanned exercise turns out to be so successful. However, I believe that this one worked so well precisely because all of us, teacher and students, were spontaneous that day. If I had sat down on Monday night and said, "O.K., this exercise will demonstrate the value of pre-writing and people will be focused because of the music, etc.," I would not have been able to present it as clearly as I had, and the students would not have picked up the "creative spark" as well as they did. Not to be overblown, but it's almost like making love...almost. All right, it's not like making love. But like making love, "sensory" lessons seem to be better when unplanned.

So from now on, I'll give myself and my students a break a couple of times a month and just grab something and take it to class. I think we trust each other enough to create something beautiful. *--Gail Hart*

* * * * * * * * *

The students in my pre-GED classes are new to the idea of the critical essay. Most of them are new to formal writing, and some are new to writing in English. They can write passable paragraphs on intimate subjects, but they're a long way from mastering the organization, structure and conventions of formal compositions. So we've got a lot to cover.

I spend about half of each class on the skills needed to organize ideas and write correct sentences to convey them. I try to introduce these a few at a time, using student writings as source material. If I see a number of students struggling with verb tense, for example, I write exercises that focus on changing present to past or vice versa.

We also work each week on the process of writing. I include worksheets with each assignment to help students list ideas before they try to write sentences or paragraphs.

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Ideas on Teaching Writing

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Later, when they have "finished" their writing, I give them concrete suggestions for proofreading: Do they have capitals where they belong? Have they used periods and commas correctly? Are the verbs correct? I try to help students apply the lessons on structure and mechanics to their own work, and I encourage them to mark corrections right on their papers.

Even so, the progress is slow. An hour--or two--devoted to recognizing and repairing run-ons is that much less time for subject-verb agreement. And what about parallel form? What about the structures that haven't appeared in student writing as source material? And what about style?

These questions, along with the anxiety I share with my students about their passing the GED, made me look for ways to accelerate the pace of my lessons. I wanted a way to let students see all the stages in the writing process. I also wanted to convince them that a sloppy draft is not the sign of a "poor" writer. These goals led me to plan a session called "Essay in Progress." The class would assign me a GED-type question, and I would write the essay and "talk through" what I was doing.

I resolved the technical difficulty of how to demonstrate the writing process to 18 people by using an overhead projector. I handed out a list of sample questions, and the class voted on the one for me to do. I used the rest of the session (about 90 minutes) to plan, write and revise the essay on the screen.

I began by analyzing the question out loud. (Just how long is 200 words?) Once we were clear about the assignment, I asked the group to call out ideas to get us started. Then we organized the list into three categories and gave each a title. An introductory paragraph followed. Then three paragraphs for the body, and one for the conclusion.

Along the way, I changed my mind, backtracked, crossed out and inserted. The students who copied the writing as it progressed had no choice but to make the same changes on their papers that I did on mine. It is still too soon for me to know how much this exercise will help students with their writing. At the very least, looking at my arrows, X's and squiggles may have shaken my students' belief that writing can appear on the page in polished, final form. --*Janet Stein*

Something Terrific in Denmark

[Reprinted with permission from the May/June 1988 issue of **The Ladder**, the newsletter of PLAN (Push Literacy Action Now) in Washington, D.C.]

The Danes appear to have the right idea in adult education. Kim Jacobsen, a Danish specialist in the field, visited PLAN during a recent tour of this country and left behind some very useful insights. According to Jacobsen and materials he left with us from the Danish Research and Development Center for Adult Education, a three-year-old body, the general approach is radically decentralized, deeply democratic and suspicious of hierarchies.

"It is the bottom, not the top, which creates the fertile soil of Danish culture," one brochure said. "Culture works its way from the bottom. You are not only a spectator: you are a participant." The material described a cultural tradition of "opposition to contemporary tutelage established by the modern authorities: specialists and experts." A fundamental premise is that adult education is "not to be based on single elements comprised in other education. It is to be built on the skills and life experience of the participating adults as a means to expand and develop their knowledge."

The Danish government has translated its philosophy into action. The program's basic principles, which determine funding priorities, include the following:

*A decentralized system of general and adult education development;

*Development "in the highest degree of independence in relation to public authorities";

*Funding priority for "adults who have only benefited from a small part of the wide range of public educational options";

*Democratic access to educational leave from work;

*Teachers who are "aware of the working conditions and of the daily situations" of their adult students, and who are selected for their "real professional and pedagogic qualifications," as opposed to formal qualifications; and

*Credit to adult learners for "actual qualifications and skills, regardless of the way these may have been acquired."

To American ears, all this echoes not only Jeffersonian social thought but also current practice among community-based educational

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Tests That Don't Defeat

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questions students ask. They do not recognize the small steps that progress comes in, nor do they recognize many forms of progress.

Damaging Qualities

Standardized tests' most ineffective, actually damaging quality is that they separate teachers and students; they intimidate and they discourage. Typically the standardized tests get harder and harder and leave an abundance of students feeling defeated at the end. Often, if the student is able to finish a standardized test, it means the test was "too low" or "too easy" and a more difficult level must be administered for the "stardardization" to fit within "effective" limits, within the norms. (Effective for whom? What norms are we fitting our students into?) In other words, for the tests to be accurate, they must be administered till students begin to fail, till they can't go on. Such tests end up reinforcing feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness that many students already experience. As one student told me, "We don't come here to find out that we've failed; we know that already."

The intimidating nature of standardized tests make many students feel small and passive. Few teachers would give these tests if they were not required. The tests force teachers into the threatening and powerful position of administering the test to the testee. We become distant from our students. We are put on the opposing side. The teacher becomes the tester, proctor, administrator, corrector, evaluator, grader, and announcer of the bad news. The judge and executioner. The student fills in the blanks.

There isn't room for these standardized tests in our literacy classrooms. As teachers, we shouldn't allow ourselves to be put in such roles, especially when teachers are coming up with a multitude of other options.

For whose benefit are we doing all this testing? When tests are designed to benefit the student they give students more control of the class and more control of their learning. When tests are designed for the bureaucracy, they lessen students' self-respect and make people feel deficient and powerless.

Options

Wanting to hear about assessment tools that are effective, that are designed for teachers and students, I collected a list from teachers. Here are seven alternatives that teachers have designed to answer the question: "How much progress are we making?"

1) **Keep all of a student's writings in a folder and compare the student's writing samples from time to time.** Teachers look for a variety of qualities, depending on the student's interests and skills: how much a student writes during a class; how their invented spelling has developed; how clear their paragraphs are; how thoroughly ideas are developoped; etc. (By the way, invented spelling is a developmental process by which beginning readers and writers use their knowledge of letter-sounds (phonics) to approximate the spelling of words and avoid having their writing limited by the quest for spelling correctness.) One teacher looks at how much of the student's "soul" is expressed in the writing.

2) **Compare the student's journal entries.** Teachers often look at not only the clarity of writing but the types of questions students are exploring and if they are moving beyond "Today I...and then...and then..." One teacher I visited considers, as a criterion for progress, whether students are connecting their own personal issues with local community issues. Another teacher looks at how much students express their own lives as a part of history.

3) **Tape oral readings and compare the error patterns over a period of time.** This is sometimes referred to as "miscue analysis."

4) **Interview students periodically about their attitudes toward reading and writing.** For example, "Do you see yourself as an author?" "What does writing mean?" "Do you read street signs?" The teacher observes/records how these attitudes change over time.

5) **Record how many books each student has read over a given period of time.**

6) **Interview the student when a test is corrected.** Ask such questions as "When you answer a question like this, how do you go about getting the answer?" This helps students focus on their process and refine it. The teacher and the student learn a lot more about how the student is thinking, what needs to be taught, and how to go about it. They learn a lot more than just finding out that the student got the answer wrong.

7) **Make a list each month of what students can do.** Eventually one teacher turned this list into a survey with such questions as:

A) The student is able to read his/her own writing-- i) with assistance; ii) without assistance.

B) The student reads ahead of an unknown word and returns to insert a word which

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Tests That Don't Defeat

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logically fits given the context-- i) rarely; ii) sometimes; iii) frequently.

C) The student uses invented spelling-- i) rarely; ii) sometimes; iii) frequently.

D) The student is able to suggest revisions on others' writing-- i) rarely; ii) sometimes; iii) frequently.

E) The student is able to revise her/his writing, to add or delete text-- i) rarely; ii) sometimes; iii) frequently.

F) The student is able to identify problematic situations found in their community and voice alternative solutions-- i) rarely; ii) sometimes; iii) frequently.

What's important in these assessment tools is that they allow the teacher to sit down beside the student and explain what they are looking for, what they are finding, and how they're finding it. These assessments allow the teacher to hear what the student's opinion is of the findings and the assessment process. This allows for a lot more precision, more accuracy, and more use of the assessment.

Sharing the Joy of Improvement

I've had students change from not being able to read aloud to reading in front of large audiences without recognizing this change in their skills. It's important for both the teacher and student tot recognize this improvement and share the joy of it. Tests rarely show the student this type of improvement.

Furthermore, the importance of these alternative assessments is that they don't just attempt to find out whether or not a student is improving. They try to find out how and why. Often these assessments will tell us which teaching techniques and learning processes are working and which ones are not. But just as often, especially in the field of adult liter- acy, other factors that affect learning will be discovered. The best assessment tools unearth these other dimensions of teaching literacy.

Once a student reshaped my assessment of her learning by telling me that her recent progress was due in part to finding day care-- her attendance went up and she didn't worry during class about her child. On a separate occasion a young man did poorly on a test and later told his teacher during a post test interview that he couldn't sleep the night before because there were gunshots going off in his neighborhood.

As I collected this growing list of assessment ideas, I realized how many alternatives exist. There are numerous ways to find out if students are learning without using the discouraging standardized tests that show students more of what they don't know than what they do know.

Obsession with Accuracy

Too many times I can remember, as an enrollment coordinator in New York, encouraging a student to keep going on a test. "Try a few more" I'd say, when both the student and I knew he or she was beyond his or her frustration point. What lengths we will go to be accurate in our assessment, to show that the students do their "best" on the test scores! For whom are we doing this acrobatic exercise?

Two interesting notes on language: My thesaurus says that a synonym for "accurate" is "just." And my dictionary defines "assessment" as "to estimate the value; to evaluate...;from the French 'to sit beside.'" The teacher-created methods value the student; the teacher sits beside the student and together they find out what's going on. Standardized forms of evaluation tend to devalue and are isolating. I propose that, in bureaucrats' and our own obsession with assessment and accuracy and controlled sciences, we have perverted assessment's more appropriate and just meanings.

The standardized tests make students feel that they must prove themselves so the program gets funding or for the students to get approval or to make the teacher feel good about him or herself. In some programs students must demonstrate their testing skills to stay in the class or to move on. The tests, and the literacy system that imposes them, turn learners and programs into beggars; asking for little, the students must "pass" in the eyes of the authority to get the few crumbs of adult literacy services that exist.

The All Write News is published every two months by the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. All signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and are not meant to reflect the views of the A.L.R.I. or its sponsoring institutions or funders. Send all material to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I. The deadline for the next issue is April 15.

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Math Notes: Did You Know...?

by Helen Jones, A.L.R.I.

Many teachers are looking for ways to help their students learn the times tables. Without a solid memory base of multiplication facts, virtually everything that comes after that in math will be more difficult than it has to be. Division, for example, requires you to pull basic multiplication facts from your memory. If the facts aren't there, division becomes unnecessarily frustrating. And **any** work with fractions requires some facility in multiplication and division. Take this addition problem, for example: 1/6 + 1/8 = ?. Even though you may have learned the **procedure**, finding the lowest common denominator in order to carry out the addition becomes an intimidating task if you don't know that the number **24** appears in both the 6's table and the 8's table.

A good grasp of the basic multiplication facts, or times tables, is essential for minimizing math frustration and maximizing math success.

Most multiplication tables have a pattern that's easier to learn than a list of individual facts. For example, in the 2's table, all the answers end in an even number (either 0,2,4,6, or 8). Students can practice counting by 2's, by 10's, by 5's, etc. In the 5's table, all the answers end in either 5 or 0, and in the 10's table all the answers end in 0. The 9's table often gives students a lot of trouble, until they learn one of these "tricks":

*Notice the ascending pattern of the first digit and the descending pattern of the second digit, in the answers to the 9's table:

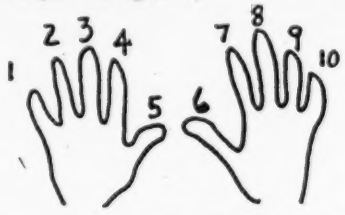
0 9
1 8
2 7
3 6
4 5
5 4
6 3
7 2
8 1
9 0

* The digits in the answer always add up to 9. Examples:

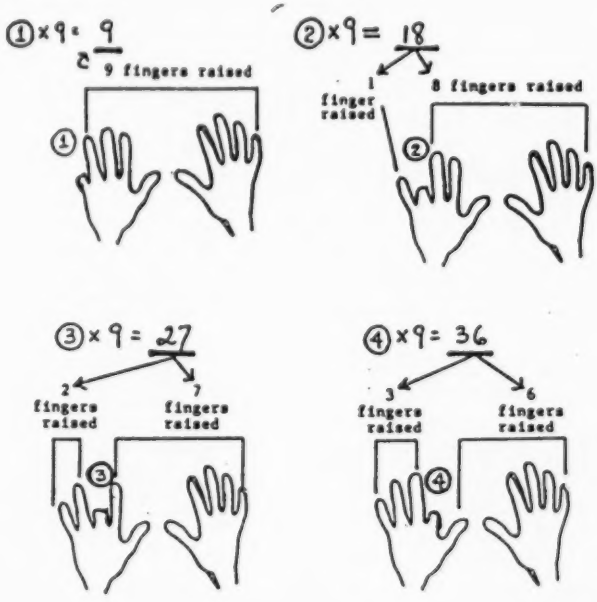
1 x 9 = 9
2 x 9 = 18 (1 + 8 = 9)
3 x 9 = 27 (2 + 7 = 9)
4 x 9 = 36 (3 + 6 = 9)
5 x 9 = 45 (4 + 5 = 9)
6 x 9 = 54 (5 + 4 = 9)
7 x 9 = 63 (6 + 3 = 9)
8 x 9 = (7 + 2 = 9) [Finish the pattern]
9 x 9 = (+ = 9)
10 x 9 = (+ = 9)

(This doesn't work beyond 10 x 9, but the 11's table has a pattern of its own. If you don't already know it, see if you can figure out what it is.)

*Some students like the so-called "finger method." Hold your hands out in front of you, palms out, thumbs in. Give each finger a number. Left pinky is #1, left ring finger is #2, left middle is #3, left index is #4, left thumb #5, right thumb #6, right index #7, right middle #8, right ring #9, and right pinky #10. (See diagram.)



For any " ___ times 9" problem, simply fold down the finger whose number matches the number you want to multiply 9 by. Then, count how many fingers you still have raised to the **left** of your folded finger, and how many fingers are still raised to the **right** of it. The number of fingers raised to the **left** becomes the **first** digit in your answer and the number of fingers to the **right** becomes the **second** digit. It's easier to show than to describe:



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Math Notes

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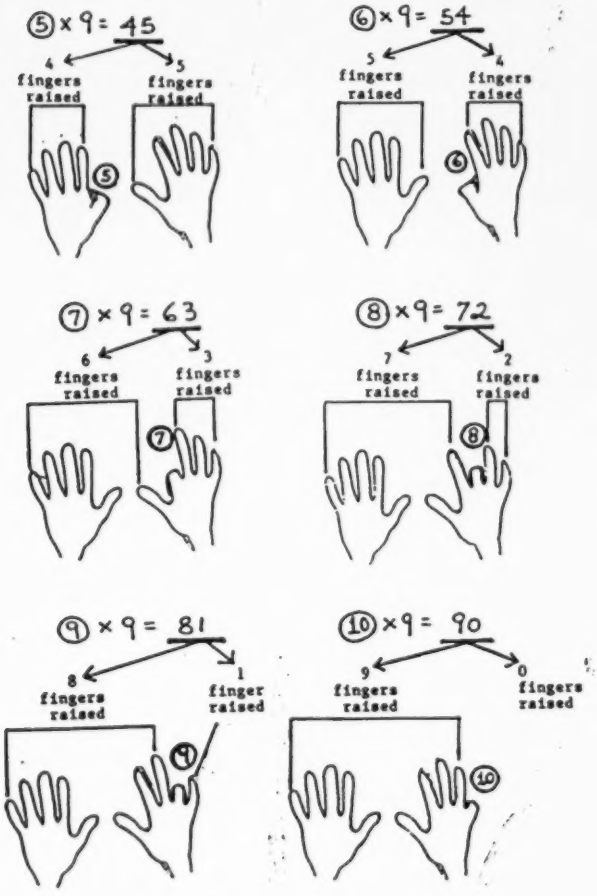

Remember, the A.L.R.I. Math Lab is now open, every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00. There have been a couple of requests for ideas and materials for working on math, especially word problems, with people who don't read at all. The Math Lab is a great opportunity for teachers who have these or other issues in common to get together and share ideas.

Something Terrific in Denmark

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groups. At PLAN, we try like the Danes to emphasize decentralized structure, students' experiences, teachers who understand and use those experiences in teaching, and a frequent opposition to rigid educational bureaucracies sagging with specialists and experts.

The difference is this: in Denmark, these ideas are official policy. Here, they remain on the fringes of resource allocation. We root for scraps of funding from short-term sources while official dollars flood into fossilized, centralized programs that have little understanding or respect for their clients. In fact, the dominant American approach seems to blame adult learners for their problems, rather than seeing in them--and their desire to learn--a basic national strength.

Government bodies at all levels, American political parties and presidential candidates, and certainly all adult education professionals would do well to examine the Danish model for visionary yet practical alternatives to dominant adult educational practices. If that's too hard, they could look more closely at what's going on in the community-based programs closer to home.

For more information on the Danish system, write: Danish Research and Development Center for Adult Education, 27 Tordenskjoldsgade, 1055 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

--Denny May

Job Exchange

Job Seekers : As always, this list may not be completely current by the time you receive it. We strongly encourage you to come in to the A.L.R.I. and look at our Job Openings book for more current information. You may also want to leave a copy of your resume with us for our Job Seekers File (used by programs with job openings) and/or sign up and leave your resume in our Substitute Teacher Bank.

El Centro del Cardenal seeks a full-time **Education Director** -- Bilingual/bicultural (Spanish/English), Master's degree in education or related field, experience with Hispanic minorities required. Salary low to mid 20's. Resume to: Elisabeth Zweig-Snippe, El Centro del Cardenal, 1375 Washington St., Boston, MA 02118.

Alianza Hispana seeks a part-time **ESL Teacher** to work evenings Mon.-Thurs. 20 hrs/wk, $20/hr. Bilingual/bicultural (Spanish/English), experience teaching and/or counseling Hispanic adults in community-based settings required. Call Tomas Kalmar at 427-7175 x 33.

Jewish Vocational Services seeks part-time **Worksite ESL Teachers** --Master's degree in ESL or BA plus 2-3 yrs. teaching experience required; experience with Hispanics and

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For Your Information

Recommendations on Literacy

On October 22, 1988, teachers and students in New York met at the New York City Adult Literacy Learner and Practitioner Caucus. Since these sorts of events are so rare, we thought we'd reprint from the Literacy Assistance Center's **Information Update** the list of recommendations that emerged from this gathering of students and teachers:

*Employers should write manuals that are easier to read and that are written by people actually on the job.

*Adult literacy programs and public schools should provide parent workshops so that parents can more actively get involved in their children's education.

*In order for non-English speakers to participate more effectively in American society, it is essential that multi-lingual information be available about college, training, classes, jobs, and transportation. Native language flyers/advertisements should be put in subways and airports.

*In order for program support services to be more responsive to adult learners, there must be access to public information on literacy services in English and other languages. Funding should be available to provide support services to learners with special needs such as physical, mental or emotional handicaps or learning disabilities.

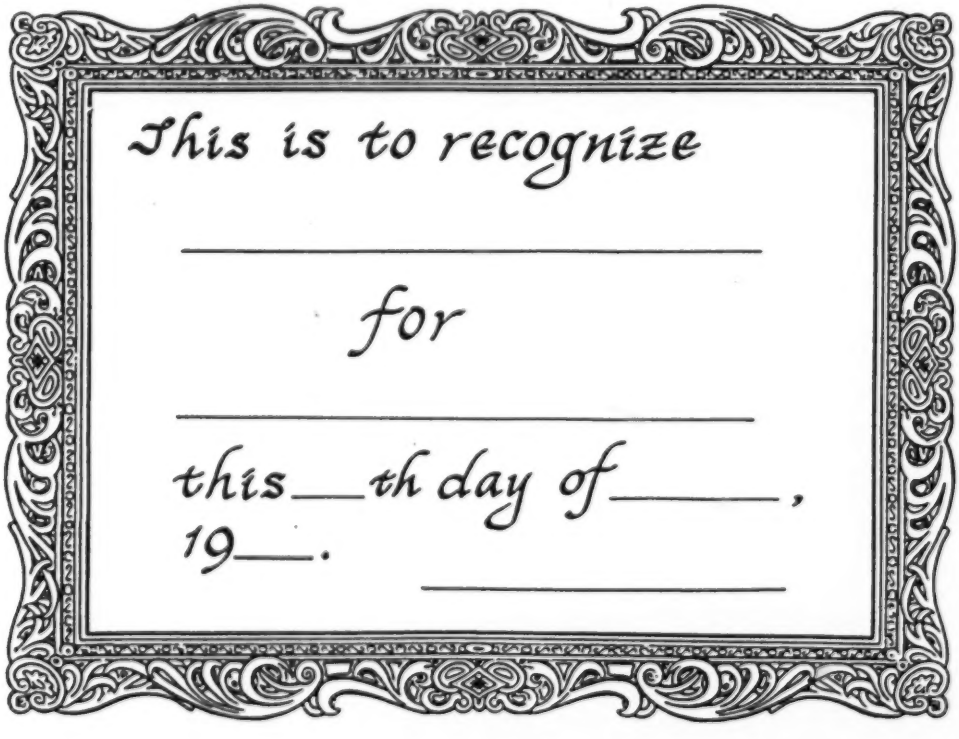
*Teachers should be provided with benefits and adequate salaries. There should be some structure which enables teachers with several part-time jobs to receive a full-time salary with benefits.

Immigration Rights Assistance

Ann Philbin at IRATE (Immigration Rights Advocacy Training and Education Project) is available to do workshops on workplace rights, legal rights, and employment issues for immigrant workers and/or staff who work with them. Call her at 266-0795.

Motivation and Achievement

One thing some programs are doing to help encourage students is to find ways of acknowledging their accomplishments. Back when she was teaching at Jobs for Youth in Boston, Jean Chambers sent us a copy of a simple certificate (reprinted below) that their program gave to their young adult students as a way of publicly recognizing various achievements. Your program may find something like this useful; obviously, you can make them in various sizes and colors. (Thanks, Jean!)



A.L.R.I. Notes

Overhead Projector Available for Loan

The A.L.R.I. now has two second-hand overhead projectors, one of which we'd be glad to lend out to programs on a short-term basis. Call David Rosen if you'd like to borrow this overhead projector.

A.L.R.I. Evaluation

During the next few months the A.L.R.I. will be conducting an evaluation of itself, with the help of an outside evaluation consultant. This evaluation is **not** being done at the request of our funding sources or any other outside agency. Rather its purpose is to provide us (the A.L.R.I. staff and steering committee) with information that will help us determine how well we are serving the needs of adult literacy/adult basic education programs in the greater Boston area, what additional needs we could be addressing, and how well the A.L.R.I. is functioning as an organization. Most of this information we hope to gather through interviews with staff at various programs and, possibly, also through questionnaires. We are in the process of hiring one or more evaluation consultants whose main task will be to plan and carry out this gathering of data, which we will then use in planning and making decisions about our services. You'll be hearing more about this evaluation as it moves along, and in the meantime feel free to call us if you have any questions or suggestions.

Follow-up to Our Scheduling Survey

In December we included in our mailing of publicity fliers a survey on the scheduling of our mini-courses and colloquia. We asked people to return the survey to us if it is generally true that they are unable to attend these events because of the days and times they are scheduled (usually weekday afternoons, occasionally weekday mornings). This survey was sent to our general mailing list of approximately 600 people. (450 of these are in the greater Boston area--the area we are primarily funded to serve--while about 90 are from around the state and 60 are located outside Massachusetts.)

So far, a total of 29 surveys have been returned. Nine people asked that we schedule more things on weekday mornings; 19 want events held on weekday evenings; and 12 asked us to schedule things on weekends. (People could check more than one.) These numbers do not represent a tidal wave of opinion, and we don't believe we should substantially change our scheduling of events at this time. However, we do see the response as significant, and we hope to try a couple of experiments over the next few months to see what the response is if we do schedule things at different times.

So, our thanks to everyone who read and thought about the survey, and especially to those who responded.

About our last issue....

To any of you who received two copies of our newsletter and fliers in January, our apologies for any confusion. As the cover note on the second mailing (which you probably received first) indicated, we first mailed this material in mid-January. After some time it became clear that the entire mailing had gotten lost somewhere, since no one on our mailing list whom we spoke to had received it. We figured we couldn't count on it eventually turning up (plus the fliers were time-dependent), so we decided to reschedule the "Re-assessing Assessment" mini-course and then redo the whole mailing. Apparently, some time after this second mailing arrived, some people (though not everyone) began receiving the **first** mailing, causing a bit of confusion. We still don't know where that first mailing went astray; we just hope it doesn't happen again.

Job Exchange

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Indochinese and worksite teaching experience preferred. Afternoons, 4-8 hrs/wk, $15-20/hr. Call Betsy Bedell at 734-0258.

An Adult Basic Education Task Force Consultant is needed to work with four statewide Task Forces to compile reports of their ongoing work. Knowledge of issues in ABE and strong research and writing skills required. Flexible hours; start ASAP, end by June 30, 1989; $20-25/hr. Call Pauline Kightlinger at (508) 793-8157.

Polaroid/Inner City seeks a full-time **Training Specialist/Coordinator** --Master's degree in education or related field, 2 yrs. related experience, bilingual (Spanish/English) required. Salary 20+. Resume and letter to: Training Dept. Polaroid/Inner City, 716 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02120.

Mass Bay Community College seeks a part-time **Coordinator/Lead Teacher** for its Work-

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place ESL project at Filene's in Natick. Master's degree in education or related field, administrative and ESL experience required. 25 hrs/wk; $20/hr. Call Robert Foreman at (508) 651-8037 or George Luoto at (617) 237-1100.

Boston Technical Center seeks a full-time **Vocational ESL Teacher** --2yrs. adult ESL experience, experience with low-income adults, especially in job training settings, experience with compentency-based education required. Call Ruth Rambo at 482-7787.

Polaroid's Tech Readiness Group seeks part-time **ESL and ABE Teachers** to work with employees in Norwood. Begins April 3, runs at least 4 hrs/wk for 52 wks, afternoon hours. $25/hr. Call Maureen O'Connor at 684-3883.

YMCA International Services seeks a **Counselor/Administrator** --Bachelor's degree, 2 yrs. experience in human services, bilingual (Spanish/English preferred), knowledge of word processing required. Salary $18,000-20,500. Call Carrie Keegan Carrizosa at 536-7800, x245.

The Association for Community-Based Education, located in Washington, D.C., seeks a full-time **Director of Literacy Programs** -- Leadership ability, experience in community-based organizations, in adult literacy teaching and in program administration, 3-year commitment required. For information on applying, call Gregg Jackson at (202) 462-6333.

SCALE in Somerville may still seek a part-time **Counselor** for its ESL/Civics Program and a part-time **GED/Basic Skills/Writing Teacher**. Call Betty Stone at 625-1335.

ODWIN Learning Center in Boston may still seek a part-time **Reading Teacher**. Call 282-5320.

OIC in Boston may still seek a full-time **ABE/GED Instructor**. Call Clarence Donelan at 442-2424.

Note to Programs: Remember to send us copies of your job announcements when you have openings. Address them to Sue Sayabovorn here at the A.L.R.I. Thanks!

ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE INSTITUTE
c/o Roxbury Community College
1234 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02120-3400

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

ALL WRITE NEWS

May/June 1989 Volume V Number 6

A Joint Program of Roxbury Community College & the University of Massachusetts at Boston
Located at: 241 St. Botolph Street, Boston (Mailing address on back) Telephone: 424-7947

Options in Program-Based Staff Development

by Steve Reigs, A.L.R.I.

Staff development is receiving more and more emphasis recently. With the high turnover of staff in this field, and the lack of pre-service training options for people entering the field, the need for on-going support and in-service staff development is being recognized as a crucial element in ABE/ESL.

Yet when the term "staff development" is mentioned, many people may think that it refers only to staff attending things away from their programs--courses, workshops, conferences, for example. These are important and can be useful for many people, but the concept of staff development contains numerous other options as well. The purpose of this article is to describe briefly some of these other staff development possibilities, particularly those that fall under the heading of what might be called "program-based" staff development, and to urge staff at programs to consider these as options for you and your program.

Program-based staff development refers to staff development activities and approaches that do not rely on external resources (for instance, the courses, workshops, and conferences I've already mentioned), but instead take advantage of the internal resources of a program or group of programs to provide staff development that is based at the program level. Most of these approaches are designed to make possible what many teachers say they seldom have time for but feel is the most valuable form of staff development--talking with, sharing ideas and experiences with, and learning from other teachers.

One group of these program-based

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Students and Teachers-- Creating an Alliance

On March 11, 1989, Mattie Wheeler (a student at Jamaica Plain Community School), Ada Cherry (a student at WEAVE), Vicky Nunez (a teacher at Jamaica Plain Community School), and Greg Leeds (from the A.L.R.I.) all went to a conference in New York City. The conference was called "Students and Teachers as Partners in Learning" and was held at Lehman College. The conference workshops were presented entirely by students or by students and teachers in collaboration.

The main purpose of the trip was to get ideas from other literacy students in New York City and to see how they help each other, to see how their programs are run, and to give them ideas on how our programs are run in Massachusetts. Below is what each of us found to be educational and interesting in New York City.

In the Big Apple

by Mattie Wheeler

It was like a dream come true. I learned that the people chose to get together and help each other. In New York I learned that student and teacher need to help each other. The teacher don't have to run around the room to help you. We can do anything. We can't sit back looking for someone to do it for us. I didn't like the video tape "Bluffing It." It make us look stupid cause we can't read or

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Remember: Please share this newsletter with others at your program. Thank you!

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Students & Teachers: Creating an Alliance
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write. We can do anything we want to. Don't let anyone tell you you can't do it.

Vicky's Thoughts
by Vicky Nunez

After a morning of exciting workshops, the afternoon was dedicated to one session just for teachers and another session just for students. The teachers had the opportunity to write about what we hoped to remember from the conference. The following is what I wrote, which came out at a very gut level.

1) Adult literacy students are intelligent people.

2) Adult learners have different learning styles which need to be recognized and respected. Teachers need to learn to be quiet so that our students have the opportunity to find their voices, and once found, we need to work hard to listen and not dismiss what they say just because it may go against what we think is best.

3) Adult student participation in an Adult Learning program is fundamental to education for social change. Student participation in their own program means that students are not being given something, but come into a learning environment in a partnership and thus in a more empowered position. This is not a recipe for instant equality; equality is a goal that must be struggled toward. Once we begin to incorporate student participation into our programs, we must take steps to insure that their participation isn't token. We should help create forums, like the conference, in which students can continue to grow and develop as partners in their learning programs.

Teachers should share their teaching philosophy with their students, and students should be aware that teachers don't know everything. We make mistakes, and very often we are learning just as much as the student. Teachers are students too.

I learned that I am RIGHT in all the caring that I do about my students, and the love that I share with them. In adult education programs we have the opportunity to be caring and sensitive human beings, and if we take advantage of that opportunity, not just during work hours, and not just in our personal and family relationships, but without boundaries, we are contributing to a more human society. Through my teaching I express my humanity, myself; I create myself with my students, and by all means we are certainly both benefitting from our partnership.

Students & Teachers as Partners in Learning
by Ada Cherry

On March 11, 1989, I went on a trip to New York City. The main purpose of the trip was to attend a Students and Teachers as Partners in Learning Conference. What I thought about the trip is that New York adult schools are so different than Boston. First of all the students that attend classes are willing to come to school to better themselves and to live better in society. They don't have enough teachers, so students are the tutors and the advocates in the classes. They have students teaching teachers, meaning the teachers learn how to teach adults better by learning how to listen to students' needs in class.

New York don't have site day care for the students. The students attend class only two days per week, two hours each day. There are handicapped students with non-handicapped. Unlike Boston welfare doesn't pay car fare for adult students. New York has a limit on how long a person stay in the program. Some schools hold classes with children and parents at the same time. And also I found out that students, parents learn with children in New York. They call each other if a classmate is out that day, it is called a "buddy" calling you.

I found the trip to be very educational. After learning so many different point of views I am most interested in forming a student support group at WEAVE where I attend classes. After returning from New York, I went to class and told the class about my trip. I feel as though I really got a good response and I was really inspired, everyone raised up their hands who wished to join. The feeling of sharing our thoughts will be so wonderful.

Greg's Thoughts
by Greg Leeds

This was the first conference I had ever attended where all workshops were presented by students. Workshop topics varied. For example, there were presentations on: "Building an Active Student Organization," "Alternative Assessment," and "Free Writing." One exemplary workshop, presented entirely by students, was "Viewpoints."

Ms. Inez Seda, Mr. Nizam Ali, and Mr. Ronald Moore, all students of Literacy Volunteers of New York City, explained the purpose of the session: "We would like to educate the public about adult learners and

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Students & Teachers Creating an Alliance

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how they are viewed in the media. We will show a video of a TV program about literacy. Then we will have an opportunity to discuss our reactions." Mr. Ali then turned on the video and showed a sample from a recent ABC special on literacy, "Bluffing It."

After a 5-minute viewing, the audience (made up of students and teachers) was asked how they thought the students were portrayed in the video. The presenters gave their opinions--they felt that this program, like many, portrayed students as helpless. The presenters facilitated the discussion and finally led it toward strategizing how they could educate the media, the public, and the literacy programs to stop these negative portrayals of students.

I have come to know one of the presenters, Ms. Seda, over the past 4 years. She has developed public speaking skills as she participated on student councils (that her literacy program encouraged her to attend) and as she helped other students in her class (tutoring them, participating on the welcoming committee for new students, creating support groups, etc.). This was not her first presentation. Her program makes a conscious effort to include students in staff and tutor development.

Her workshop captures for me the essense of what the conference was reaching for: trusting students and in so doing developing an alliance with them that will lead to the best quality and most respectful education. Students were teaching teachers, they were correcting negative images portrayed by a media that was "helping" them (helping not in partnership), and they were strategizing how to change the bad images.

Students who presented at the conference thought their participation was important for several reasons: for the experience of public speaking and designing workshops, and for developing employment skills, life skills, and political organizing skills. Some saw it as political--as a way to gain power. Some saw it as a way to help other students; some saw it as a way to get ahead.

Teachers who came to the conference saw it in many ways, too. Some saw the student presentations as a concrete step towards (the often tossed around phrase) "empowering" or "participatory" education. Some felt it wasn't for all students--that not all students had the time or interest in participating in something like this. But even those who didn't participate benefitted: from seeing models of students who participated, from the reshaping of teachers attitudes--moving away from attitudes of students being helpless--and from the restructuring of programs that could come out of the partnership .

Some teachers felt this merger of students and teachers was paternalistic--a few pet students benefitted but no structural programmatic changes were going to come out of it. Along this note, they pointed to the fact that at many of the workshops, while students presented, the students looked toward the teacher for direction, approval, and even permission to speak. Some felt the student councils and workshops that had developed acted as little more than rubber stamps: they were just tools to help promote what the directors already wanted to do, but with a student voice to make it happen. These teachers saw the conference and the student councils the same as many high school governments. They give an authentic indigenous sound but the agenda is still that of the school's principal and teachers. Many people felt that literacy practitioners are not ready to give up and share power.

I agree with these comments but I saw the conference as a new opening of political space. Students were being invited to participate in their program's development. They were being invited to help train the teachers and to form councils. How much their advice will be trusted and respected is still

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A student support group would be beneficial to adult students in Boston. We find that a student support group could serve these purposes and could be run by the following principles:

1) Students only (maybe teachers sometimes)

2) Help each other in crisis and need of friends

3) Students relate to students better than to teachers

4) Students could bring your homework when you miss class. or carfare. food and clothing for students having a hard time

5) Students could call students who are out of school rather than the teacher calling

6) Tell how important school is to them and their family

7) To teach them to be more independent for themselves and their family

8) It will help the student open up more

9) Rapping in class could be fun

10) It will help to release stress

11) It will help you to learn more about your family and friends. students. etc.

--Mattie Wheeler and Ada Cherry

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Program-Based Staff Development

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approaches is built around teachers' current classes. In **peer coaching** two teachers with roughly equivalent experience pair up to help each other, such as by observing each other's classes and providing non-judgmental feedback, or through team-teaching. (In these descriptions, "experience can mean either general experience as an ABE or ESL teacher or specific experience in a particular area or at a particular level. I should also say that, although all these description are presented in terms of teacher participation, many could also be adapted for use by counselors, administrators, or other program staff.)

In **peer observation** two or more teachers agree just to observe each other's classes, without necessarily providing direct feedback. In **mentor coaching** a more experienced teacher pairs up with, observes, and provides help to a less experienced teacher. With **class observations** less experienced teachers visit the classes of a more experienced teacher, while with **guest teacher visits** one teacher "guest teaches" another person's class to demonstrate a particular approach or technique. And finally, for programs with access to video equipment, **video taping** classes can provide another way of observing other teachers or, probably more importantly, a means for a teacher to step back and observe herself and her class.

Another group of approaches involves teachers working together in ways that are not built around their current classes. In **study groups** teachers meet as a group to explore, read about, and discuss a particular issue or topic. In **teacher sharing groups** teachers meet to share ideas and methods, to share problems and successes, to problem-solve, and to make presentations to one another. With **group projects** a group of teachers agrees to work together on a particular project, such as developing curriculum or writing or reviewing materials.

Finally, there are a few other approaches that do not quite fit into either of the two groups just described. In **self-study** an individual teacher works by herself on some project of independent study. In **meetings with students** teachers get together with students for focused discussions to get the students' perspectives on learning and teaching.

And finally, we must recognize the importance of keeping experienced, knowledgeable, caring teachers in this field. Unless we are able to do this and to reduce the incredibly high turnover rates that generally prevail within this field, the staff development situation will continue to resemble that of the Red Queen in Lewis Carroll's **Through the Looking Glass**, who must run harder and harder just to stay in place. For this reason, teachers **working together to improve working conditions** (salaries, benefits, job security, etc.) should also be seen as an important aspect of staff development.

If staff are interested in one or more of these approaches, programs might think about what they could do to help make them happen. Some examples: The program coordinator (or, in some cases, maybe an A.L.R.I. staff person) could act as a substitute teacher in order to free up the regular teachers to visit one another's classes. A program could set aside a certain time each week or each month for teachers to meet with each other, or it could shut down classes at some time during the year and use those days for staff development. (See Lenore Balliro's article in the Jan./Feb. issue of this newsletter for an account of how one program was able to pull off a useful series of peer observations.) Also, two programs that are located close to each other or that have something in common or that simply want to learn from each other could work out arrangements for making one of these ideas happen as a joint project.

If you'd like to talk about any of these ideas or about how your program might carry them out, feel free to call me or one of the other staff here at the A.L.R.I. We're very much interested in the possibilities and potential of these program-based staff development approaches.

Student & Teachers Creating an Alliance

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unknown.

In the past I have seen students frustrated when structural changes they suggested were ignored. This frustration leads some students to quit and others to look for other paths to make changes. The programs that were in this conference opened up a space for students to participate. If the programs close off that space when they feel threatened, the students will open up new spaces for themselves.

So little political space exists for the students we are trying to serve that I applaud any attempt to rectify this situation. I see down the road a literacy system that is a web of teachers and students, funders and advocates, all collaborating and sharing power. Small steps like this conference are steps down that road.

Legislative Update from the Mass.Coalition for Adult Literacy

by Ann Pastreich

There are two pieces of legislation presently in process on Beacon Hill which directly involve ABE/literacy funding. The first is the state budget which was more or less zapped through the House and approved, with amendments, at the end of March. (Overheard in a State House corridor: "They never moved **this** fast before!") The Senate Ways and Means Committee, now developing its own version of the budget, is moving under the direction of Pat McGovern at a much slower pace.

The House Budget, H5600, gives ABE/literacy what is this year considered a boon: we are being allowed to maintain our always precarious toe-hold. I have been attending weekly TEAM (Tax Equity Alliance of Massachusetts) meetings, and it's clear that other human services/educational agencies have been potentially cut, slashed, or destroyed, leaving us in a position we have been in before--grateful for public funding which addresses 3% of those needing ABE/literacy services in Massachusetts.

The ABE community influenced the state budget this year, not so much in combatting cuts (although our increased visibility over the past year may have in fact mitigated against cuts), but in successfully convincing the House that its original plan to streamline the ABE system under the Department of Employment and Training (DET) was not for the best. Most funds originally slated for administration under DET were either restored or transferred to the Department of Education by amendment. One exception is $1,170,000 of Supportive Service money which funds ABE in local housing authorities and which still rests in DET.

At present, the sections of H5600 which allocate ABE funds are expected to be maintained in the Senate version of the budget. If the Senate makes changes, the final allocation for ABE will be hammered out in conference committee. MCAL will keep tabs on the process and call on our now formidable field of supporters for help if needed.

The second piece of legislation concerning ABE funding is H102, a bill which asks for $8 million in increased funding for ABE services in FY90. The Word from Beacon Hill, as usual, is that we do not have the smallest chance of receiving any such increase amid the current fiscal crisis. Our response, for the second consecutive year, will be an attempt to get the bill passed without a dollar amount. This gives us an additional toe-hold to work with, one that in some more favorable season may give us a real boost upward.

With both our issues, cohesive support from ABE students, practitioners, and advocates is the key and MCAL will be supplying bulletins and newsletters as things evolve. Please call us if you need more information or for a schedule of our Public Policy meetings (1-800-447-8844).

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Ann Pastreich is the Information & Referral Specialist for MCAL.

Job Exchange

Job Seekers: As always, this list may not be completely current by the time you receive it. We strongly encourage you to come in to the A.L.R.I. and look at our Job Openings book for more current information.

ABCD may still need an **Education Coordinator** its Learning Center. PhD or significant graduate work in education, experience teaching in and managing education programs (especially for out-of-school youth and adults), experience with competency-based education and computer-assisted instruction required. Call Jay Ostrower at 357-6000.

Northshore Employment and Training may still be looking for a REEP ESL Instructor. BA degree or equivalent, ESL teaching experience (preferably in introductory/survival ESL) required. Call Kathy Hoffman at 593-3100.

Polaroid Inner City may still need a part-time **ABE/GED Teacher**. Experience in adult education and BA degree in related field required. 20 hrs/wk; $12-15/hr. Call Terri Shine at 577-5500.

New Readers Press in Syracuse may still need **Associate Editors** in Reading and ESL. Relevant Master's degree and teaching experience and demonstrated writing ability required. Send resume and letter including salary history to: Director of Personnel, New Reader's Press, P.O. Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210.

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For Your Information

Free Administrative T.A.

The Boston Adult Literacy Fund is now offering free technical assistance on organizational development, proposal and budget preparation, and other administrative issues to Boston adult literacy programs. It's happening on a drop-in basis or by appointment every third Thursday of the month (5/25, 6/22, 7/20, 8/17, 9/21, etc.) from 2pm to 5pm at our offices at 241 St. Botolph Street, room 210.

You can turn to us for help with: guidance on planning and program development; feedback on your proposal and advice on how to improve it; suggestions for budget preparation and fiscal monitoring; examples from other organizations; ideas for better program administration; and reference materials on foundations, fundraising and organizational development. Call Joanne Appleton Arnaud or Silja Kallenbach at 266-1891 if you're interested.

Computers and Adult Literacy

The United South End Settlements has been hosting quarterly meetings of the Greater Boston ABE Software Sharing Group since last June. Speakers are invited to make presentations on the use of computers in adult literacy and participants are encouraged to share information on what software has (or hasn't) worked for them. It is a useful forum for people new to the field of Technology in Adult Education to become familiar with the issues involved and also for those programs already using computers to gain from the experience of others.

At our November meeting we invited Toni Stone of Playing to Win, Inc., Ruth Nickse from Boston University's School of Education, and Ken Vorspan of Mass. Bay Community College's Learning Center to discuss the use of word processing in ABE. John Adams of Literacy Programming International was the speaker at our last meeting. He demonstated the LPI Literacy Program which he created. Out next meeting will be held at the end of May. We hope to invite George Hanafi from Merrimack Education Center to demonstrate M.E.C.'s database of ABE software. A demonstration of the WICAT Learning Center which is on loan at USES is also planned.

If you are not on our mailing list but would like to be informed of future meetings, please contact me at USES, 536-8610 x245.

--Anita Kron

The Massachusetts GED Math Team

The Massachusetts GED Math Team is a group of adult ed. teachers who have met since the fall of 1988 to share ideas about effective math instruction for students preparing for the GED Math Test.

The team is developing ways to change the methods and curriculum traditionally used in GED Math instruction to focus on practical strategies, appropriate curriculum, and critical thinking skills which students will need to maximize success on the new GED test. The math team has prepared teaching tips and worksheets to cover the most important topics on the test as well as handouts on "What You Can Expect to Find on the New GED Math Test."

When the team first met we carefully reviewed the "new" GED math preparation books out on the market. Unfortunately, perhaps because of haste to get them out as soon as possible, the books did not adequately reflect the changes in the GED. Also, there were national and local reports that the GED math test was giving folks a hard time (scores were coming in on the low side). Janet Baldwin and Douglas Whitney of the GED Testing Service contend that, "Because the new mathematics test places more emphasis on the problem solving skills than in the past, drill and practice in computation is not only an inadequate approach to math instruction for adults, but it is also less useful than are other approaches."

We agreed with this and decided we'd put together activities and materials on problem solving. Additionally, since the GED is much less computationally oriented, we decided to reorder the content to encourage teachers to bring some of the most important and interesting content "up front." In other words, to make them first priority--thus the title of our curriculum, **GED Priority Math**.

The Math Team feels that the student should concentrate on whole number operations in the different areas and on the process of **how** to solve the problems rather than on the numerical solution. **Notation** is the first topic the Math Team stresses. Many adults are not familiar with set-up problems and, since 25% of the problems are of this type, we are concentrating on notation throughout the different topics. We have organized the math content areas as listed below. Teachers may choose to concentrate on them in any order.

The GED Priority Math Topics are: Notation (ready now), Problem Solving (ready now), Introduction to Geometry (ready now),

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For Your Information

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Introduction to Algebra (in process), Perimeter, Area, and Volume (in process), Ratio and Proportion (in process), Units of Measurement (in process), and Fractions, Decimals, and Percents (in process).

These topics can be covered at the beginning of a student's preparation or integrated into any GED math curriculum quite easily. We suggest that teachers who have tight time constraints for math prep for the GED make sure students at least cover the Priority Math topics.

Please call me at the Boston Workplace Education Collaborative, 266-6133 (or call Mary Jane Schmitt at the Bureau of Adult Education, 770-7472) if you have ideas or strategies that you think would be helpful or if you'd like to find out about the workshops being presented by members of this team.

--Joan A. Ford

Exploring Arts-Literacy Connections

The Boston Adult Literacy Fund is interested in exploring possibilities for developing special projects that use the arts/creative expression as the medium for literacy or ESL instruction. We know of some projects, locally and in other states, that have focused on drama, creative writing, photography, video production, or music. We also know that there are many artistic teachers and students in literacy and ESL programs, some of whom might be interested and challenged to apply their artistic talents more fully in their literacy work.

We would like to hear from you any ideas which could be explored further and developed into projects for which the Fund would seek financial support. To be clear, we do not have any funds to give out for this purpose at present. It could take as long as a year for any funding to come through. Although we cannot guarantee success in the fundraising, we think this could easily evolve into an appealing, fundable and fun project from which we can all learn. If you're interested in this, please call us at 266-1891.

--Joanne Appleton Arnaud & Silja Kallenbach

Women in the Building Trades

Women in the Building Trades (WIBT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping women pursue careers in the skilled building trades. Begun in 1986, this Boston-based agency has graduated over 100 women from its 10-week pre-apprenticeship training program. Offered four times a year, this class helps prepare women for union apprenticeships and is free for low and moderate income women. And over 700 women have taken the free introductory workshops conducted by WIBT. These two-hour workshops offer general information about unions, informs women of how and when to apply for apprenticeships and whom to contact, and gives specific information about WIBT's pre-apprenticeship training program.

Staff for WIBT also conduct community workshops in order to educate agencies, schools, construction contractors, and state and local governments about the issues of affirmative action and non-traditional jobs for women. WIBT assists women with job placement once they've graduated from the pre-apprenticeship training program and offers support for the "long haul" by conducting an on-going support group open to all women apprentices. Interested women can contact WIBT at 266-2338.

The **All Write News** is published every two months by the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. All signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and are not meant to reflect the views of the A.L.R.I. or its sponsoring institutions or funders. The A.L.R.I. Classification Number for this issue is LV301.M37.A4.Vol.5,No.6. Send all material to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I. **The deadline for the next issue is June 15.**

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A.L.R.I. Notes

"Need I Say More"

The big dream was always alive...
I hoped it was just a bad moment...
I am a woman who has tumbled and turned...

The above are the first lines or titles of writings found in the first volume of Boston's newest literary journal. **Need I Say More** is a literary magazine of adult student writings. It is the first of its kind in the Boston area ans is the result of the Publishing for Literacy Project, a fruitful partnership of the Brookline Public Library and the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. This project has as its main goal the development and promotion of writing in the Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language communities in this area. It has brought together, in writing, the multi-cultural

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Recent Additions to the A.L.R.I. Library

Compiled by James McCullough

* = a circulating and a non-circulating research copy.
** = for research or REFERENCE use only.

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A.L.R.I. Notes

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diversity of the city so that students may read about, be inspired by, and learn from each other's experiences.

The magazine (two volumes of which have appeared so far) demonstrates once again for teachers and students alike the power found in reading texts that come from real experiences. As the preface to Volume I states, "The nature of creativity is the struggle to tell a personal story as sincerely as your skills can afford." Because the adult students have different levels of skills, some of the writings are written in non-standard English and some are in the student's native language. This diversity in language skills is a real plus; it means the writings have not been homogenized by some teacher's pen but rather still reflect the student's original vibrancy. In addition to the mixed reading levels represented in the volumes, there is also a wide range of forms and of topics. One can find everything from essays to poetry, from drugs to potty training. For these reasons alone, the magazines make ideal "readers" for both ESL and ABE students. They can be used as whole texts, or they can be read in sections or as individual selections.

The authenticity of the writings helps reconnect reading back to writing. As one program director put it, "They have effectively awakened students' interest in writing at all levels of ability." The writings have become the inspiration for more writing. Thus, **Need I Say More** is a welcome addition to the growing body of student-generated materials now becoming available for adult learners. By publishing the writings of adult students and recognizing them as authors, the magazine has validated for the ABE and ESL communities that their experiences and thoughts are worth reading and worth knowing. The magazine may be ordered by writing to me at the A.L.R.I.

--Kona Khasu, Project Coordinator

Staff Changes

We're sorry to announce that Greg Leeds will soon be leaving the A.L.R.I.. Greg has been with us as an ABE resource person since early in 1987. During the summer months, he plans to be working in Nicaragua and Colombia. He'll then be returning to Boston in the fall, when he will be seeking consultant work in this field. Our thanks to Greg and our best wishes to him for the future.

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